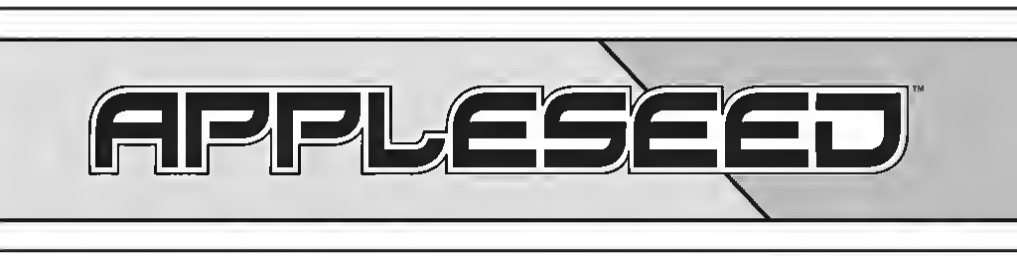
士郎正宗

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

APPLESEED™

SHIROW MASAMUNE


APPLESEED™

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APPLESEED™ BOOK TWO: PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

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PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

story and art by SHIROW MASAMUNE

translation by DANA LEWIS + TOREN SMITH
[with DUANE JOHNSON]

lettering by TOM ORZECHOWSKI

003 [8] ALIEN

047 [9] OOMINATE THE MINO

080 [10] HIDE & SEEK

108 [11] ZERO HOUR

119 [12] BATTLE OF TUPHON

165 [13] APPLE SEED

180 [14] CYBERNETICS

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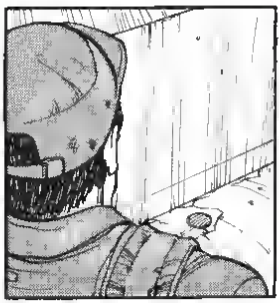
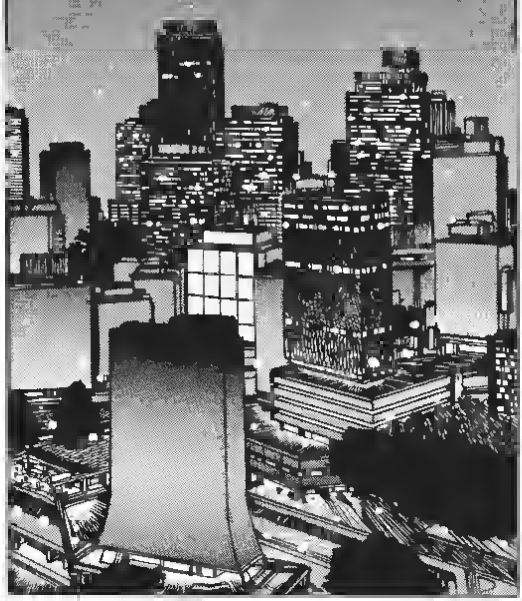
SHIROW MASAMUNE



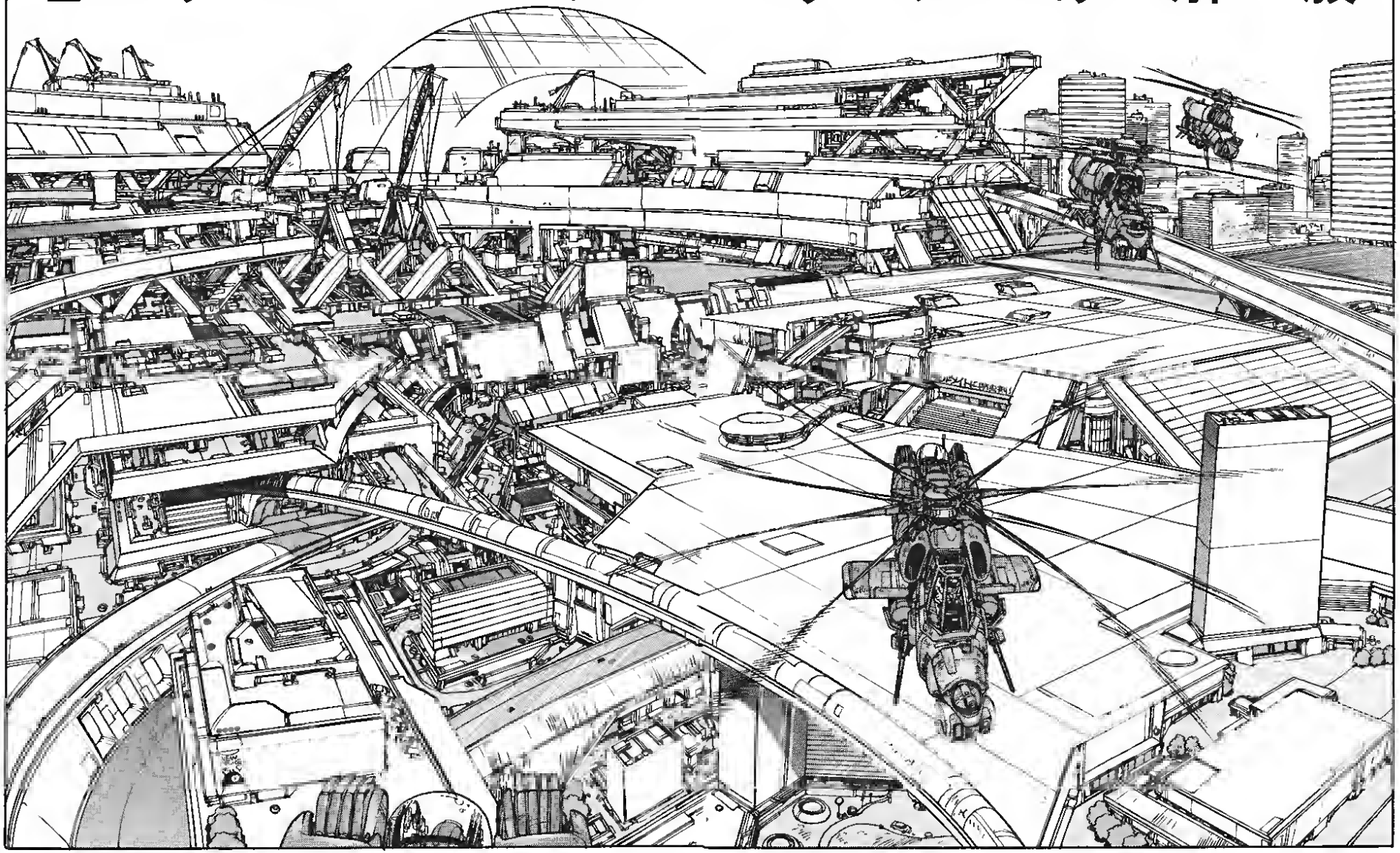
THE TIME IS EARLY IN THE TWENTY-SECOND CENTURY. THE EARTH HAS BEEN UNIFIED UNDER **AEGIS**, A CENTRAL MANAGEMENT BUREAU RUN EXCLUSIVELY BY **BIOROIDS** (ENHANCED ARTIFICIAL HUMANS).

UNDER THE BENEVOLENT BUT WATCHFUL EYE OF AEGIS THE OLD NATIONS ARE RUSHING TO REBUILD FROM THE DESTRUCTION WROUGHT BY THE THIRD WORLD WAR.

YET PEOPLE STILL PAUSE SOMETIMES TO WONDER HOW THE WAR REALLY BEGAN--AND DARK CLOUDS HAVE BEGUN TO GATHER OVER AEGIS ITSELF...

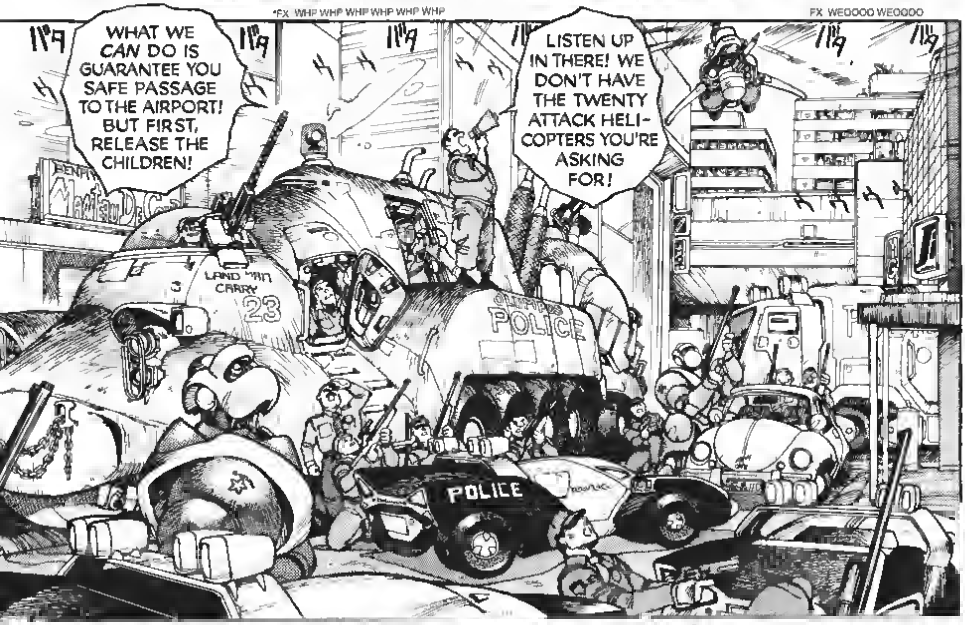


2. プロメテウスの解放

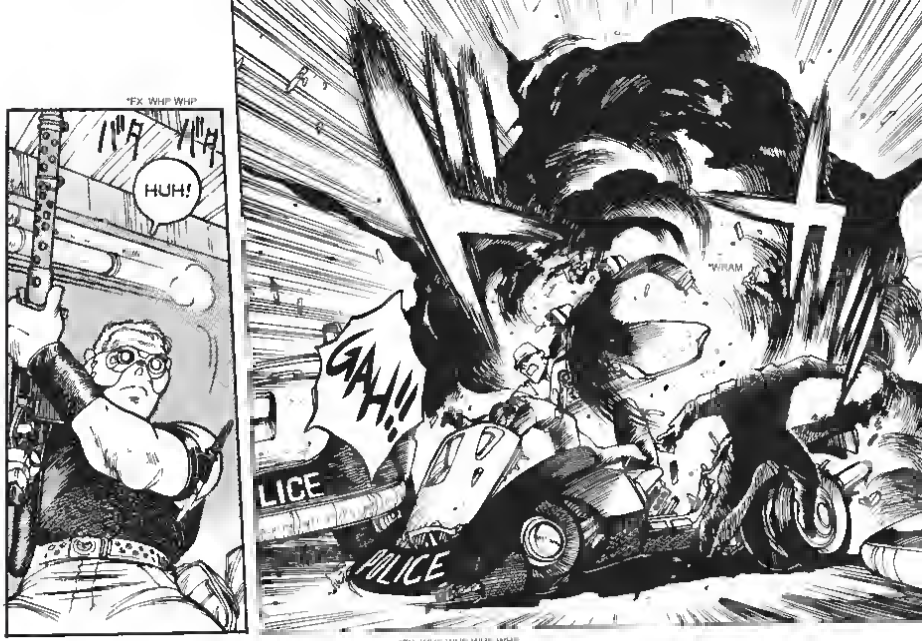


FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP
バタ
バタ
バタ
バタ
POLICE
NMPH!
FX: WHP WHP WHP
TINK
WHP
WHP
WHP
WHP
SKE EEK

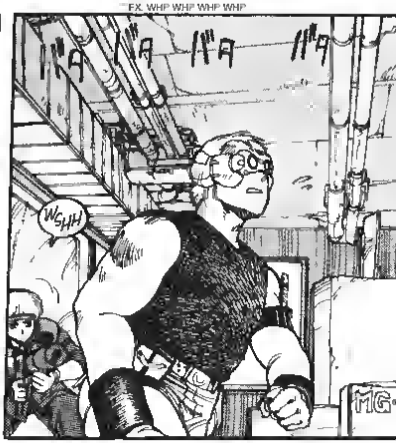
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHIP
WHOO!
KCHAK
FX: WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP


*FX: WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP
FX: WEOOOO WEOOOO
WHAT WE CAN DO IS GUARANTEE YOU SAFE PASSAGE TO THE AIRPORT! BUT FIRST, RELEASE THE CHILDREN!
LISTEN UP IN THERE! WE DON'T HAVE THE TWENTY ATTACK HELI-COPTERS YOU'RE ASKING FOR!
LAND MAN CARRY
23
POLICE
POLICE

*WHOOSH
POLICE
*FX: WHIP WHIP WHIP
YOU'VE GOT FIVE MINUTES BEFORE WE START WASTING HOSTAGES--KIDS FIRST!
KCHAK
STOP JERKING US AROUND!!


*FX. WHP WHP
HUH!
*WRAM
GAH!!
LICE
POLICE

*FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP
DON'T LEAVE YOUR POST, YOU IDIOT!
SARGE! THEY'VE CHANGED NEGOTIATORS ON US AGAIN...


*FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP
WSHH

*FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
*FX. WHP WHP
IT'S JUST A DUMMY GRENADE. NO GAS.
SIR... SOME OF THE OLDER HOSTAGES HAVE RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS.
WE CAN'T EVEN USE SMOKE..
FX. WHP WHP
QUIET!
THE SNIPERS AT THE BACK GOT THE WATCHDOG, BUT THE ASSAULT SQUAD IS STILL--
*POF
ポン!
.....
HMM...
TAP TAP
POLICE
POLICE
S&W

*FX KSSH
!
HEY! OPERA-TIONAL BRIEFING--EVERY-BODY IN!
WHA --?
*PAF
THE SMELL... IT'S NOT...!
GAS?! WHEN WE'VE GOT HOSTAGES? GET YOUR MASKS ON!
FX. SPAK SPAK
KYAA!
EEEK!
FX. BARAM
*FX. BRRRRT
HIT THE DECK!
ZASH

KOTUS!
HEY!
*ERRT
UHG!
!
*FX WHSST
HEAD FOR THE NEXT--
*FX BTAM
!
THEY'RE SWAT!
*ZA
*FX SKCH
YAA!

PK!N
!
SMAK
FX BKOOOM
*KSSH
*KSSH
KYA!
UGH!
WHOOSH
!

*FX. GRN GRN GRN GRN
HEH, HEH..
OWW
*FX VNNNNN
FX KNAK
FLINCH
NO! DON'T PULP HIM!
breep boop?!
THAT ONE WE ARREST INVESTIGATIONS WANTS HIM.

AND DON'T LET ANYONE DOWN THIS CORRIDOR EXCEPT FORENSICS. I'LL DO THE REPORT.
YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN SILENT OR TO AN ATTORNEY...
HE'S A CYBORG, SO MAKE SURE YOU GIVE HIM A REAL SEARCH. REMOVE ANY DETACHABLE LIMBS.
pyoot pyoo
THIS IS JUST TOO MUCH! EVEN FOR BREAKING THEIR MORALE, PUBLIC OPINION IS ALWAYS DOWN ON THIS SORT OF THING!
broop?
ALL RIGHT, WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA HERE?
FX: WEEOOO
....
EVEN ROBOTS LAST LONGER THAT WAY.
THIS IS THE SAME THING! THINK A BIT ABOUT WHAT "POLICE" REALLY MEANS, OKAY?
YOU HEARD ME SAY NOT TO USE SHOTGUNS BECAUSE OF THE HOSTAGES, DIDN'T YOU?
I KNOW, I KNOW. JUST GO BACK TO HEADQUARTERS AND GET SOME REST.
pyoot broop beep!

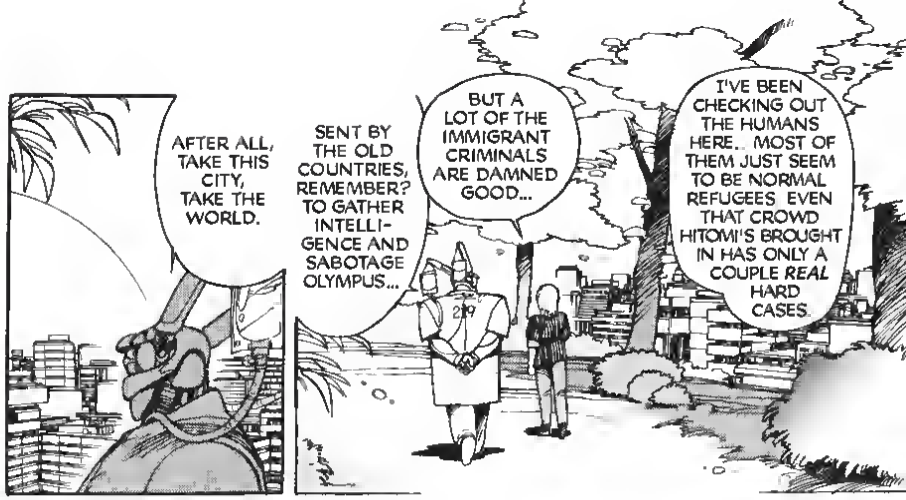
SWAT
YO, THERE-- WORKING HARD, ARE WE, DEUNAN?
SER-GEANT!
NO WONDER THEY MADE ME ACTING SERGEANT.
PRACTICALLY NO ONE WITH POLICE EXPERIENCE... JUST A BUNCH OF EX-MURDERERS
SO JOHN USED TO BE A MERCENARY IN RHODESIA? HE'S GOT TO BREAK THAT HABIT OF SHOOTING EVERYONE IN SIGHT..
THAT LEAVES JUST KOTUS, OUR MYSTERY ROBOT.
FORMER MACV*?? NO SHIT??

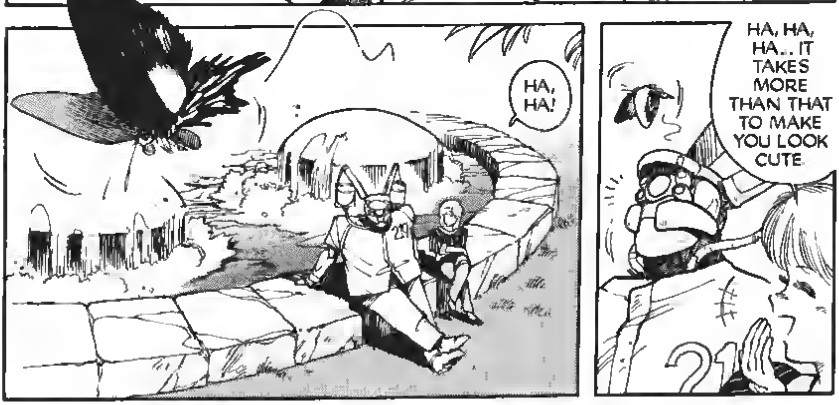
*MACV CIA special operations group

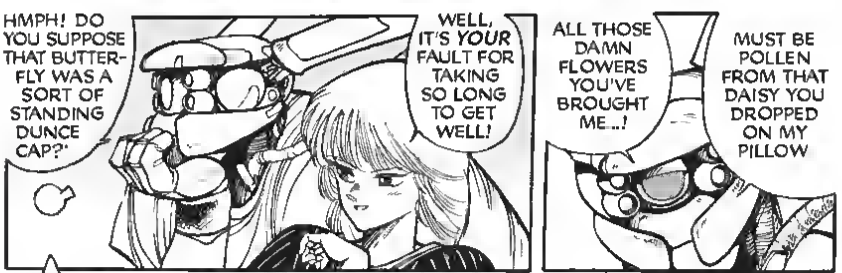
SORRY ABOUT THIS ..BUT I WAS CALLED IN BY CHIEF OF STAFF NIKE HERSELF. TOOK FOREVER
THEY'RE WELL-TRAINED, BUT THEY'RE SO *SO SLOW!*
THEY DON'T HAVE A SENSE OF MISSION-- THEIR TEAMWORK STINKS! JUST *LOOK* AT THIS REPORT!
TODAY WAS JUST *TOO* MUCH! EVERYTHING WAS SO SCREWED UP, IT'S A MIRACLE WE AREN'T ALL DEAD!
..BUT I AGREE THAT THIS TEAM IS NO PLACE FOR A PRO OF *YOUR* CALIBER. SO..
I'VE GOT MY DOUBTS, BECAUSE YOU'RE SO YOUNG..
WHAT DID WE DO TO BRING THAT BUNCH OF ANIMALS DOWN ON US?
NIKE? ONE OF THOSE POLITICOS?
?!
ACTUALLY IT WAS ABOUT YOU...
YOU'VE BEEN *HEAD-HUNTED?!*

WATCH IT... TRAINING ACCIDENTS ARE A GREAT WAY TO GET RID OF UNDESIR-ABLES...
ANYWAY, IT'LL MOSTLY BE STUDY AND SPECIAL TRAINING AT FIRST. I'LL STILL BE ABLE TO COME SEE YOU, THOUGH
YEAH, FOR SOME *SWAT* UNIT DEALING WITH SPECIAL CRIMES, REPORTING DIRECTLY TO ADMINIS-TRATIVE DIRECTOR ATHENA.
I'LL GET THE DETAILS WHEN I MEET THEM LATER TODAY.
WELL, HUH!
LOOKS LIKE A *P7** UNDER THOSE WHITES. TO A CIVILIAN HE'D LOOK CLEAN.
HE'S ARMED.
I DON'T THINK YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT AT FIRST, BUT DON'T LET THEM KNOW WHAT YOU DO. SEE THAT GUY UNDER THE TREE THERE?
SINCE WHEN AM I A *WOLF-MAN,* HUH?
SILVER BULLETS HURT PLENTY, MY BOY!
...AND I'LL BET THEY'VE BEEN TAILING YOU AS WELL.
TAKE MORE THAN A 9MM TO STOP ME
ANYWAY, THEY'VE OBVI-OUSLY GOT ME MARKED...
OH, YEAH, YEAH..

*P7 from Heckler & Koch of West Germeny A ges-operated delayed-blowback 9MM pistol used for close combat and stealth operations


AFTER ALL, TAKE THIS CITY, TAKE THE WORLD.
SENT BY THE OLD COUNTRIES, REMEMBER? TO GATHER INTELLI-GENCE AND SABOTAGE OLYMPUS...
BUT A LOT OF THE IMMIGRANT CRIMINALS ARE DAMNED GOOD...
I'VE BEEN CHECKING OUT THE HUMANS HERE.. MOST OF THEM JUST SEEM TO BE NORMAL REFUGEES EVEN THAT CROWD HITOMI'S BROUGHT IN HAS ONLY A COUPLE *REAL* HARD CASES.




HMPH! DO YOU SUPPOSE THAT BUTTER-FLY WAS A SORT OF STANDING DUNCE CAP?*
WELL, IT'S *YOUR* FAULT FOR TAKING SO LONG TO GET WELL!
ALL THOSE DAMN FLOWERS YOU'VE BROUGHT ME...!
MUST BE POLLEN FROM THAT DAISY YOU DROPPED ON MY PILLOW

*dunce cap a paper hat placed on the head of a slow or lazy pupil

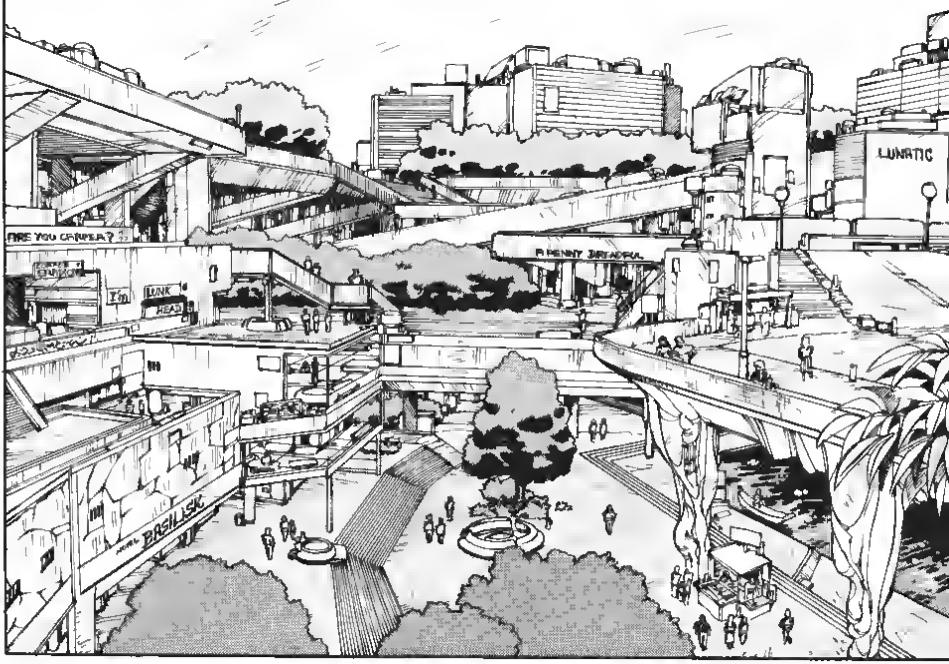
AH, IT WAS NOTHING, I ASSURE YOU. SUCH A POLITE YOUNG LADY, HEH, HEH...
THANK YOU EVER SO MUCH, DOCTOR!
HI.
OHO.. GREETINGS, GREETINGS!
YOU SAW ME..? OH! WHEN I WAS AT THE A.A.*
THOSE FIVE TERRORISTS WITH THE HOSTAGES! I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE WITH SWAT!
SAY, YOU WERE ON THE TELEFORM LAST NIGHT, WEREN'T YOU?
YES! YES! I SAW YOUR FACE ON THE SECURITY CAMERAS, CLEAR AS DAY!
FX HA HA HA HA
おっはっはっは
HAPPENS ALL THE TIME!
GRUM-BLE...
THROWN OUT ON HER ASS-- ALL VERY POLITELY, OF COURSE.
SHE GOT IN THE TEAM'S WAY SO MUCH SHE'S BEEN TRANS-FERRED ANYWAY, DOCTOR...
219
OH DEAR! WHAT A SHAME! HEH, HEH...
MISSED THE CLIMAX, THOUGH, DRAT IT ALL.

AA Assembly Area Sometimes called the "staging area." The location where the SWAT team assembles to pick up weapons and get their instructions

WE CAN EXTEND LONGEVITY... IN FACT, WE'RE ONLY A STEP AWAY FROM *IMMORTALITY*.
DON'T WORRY, YOUNG LADY. THERE ISN'T AN INJURY OR DISEASE WE CAN'T CURE HERE IN OLYMPUS.
*GRIN
HRMMPH! WHY DO YOU KEEP ON ASKING ME THAT?!
BY THE WAY... WHEN CAN HE COME HOME?
WHAT FOLKS WANT AND WHAT NATURE DECREES ARE IN CONSTANT CONFLICT.
EXACTLY, EXACTLY!
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S GOING A LITTLE TOO FAR? OR THEN AGAIN...
THEY'VE EVEN SCARRED THE TROPICAL RAIN FOREST AND THE CONTINENTAL SHELVES, THE KEY REGULATORS FOR THE ENTIRE SYSTEM.
BUT THEN HUMANS COME ALONG AND TEAR INTO IT! USE IT UP! POLLUTE IT!
IT'S A FINE BALANCE OF ORGANIC AND INORGANIC SYSTEMS, ALL WORKING IN HARMONY... IT'S LIKE A SINGLE, LIVING ORGANISM.
LOOK AT THIS EARTH HERE!
FWAP
WHOLE DAMN WORLD'D BE A MORE PEACEFUL PLACE IF THEY'D JUST LEAVE IT TO THE BIOROIDS!
*FX COOO

AND IT'S ALL EXPLAINED IN THIS FASCINATING BOOK OF MINE! WON'T YOU BUY A COPY OR TWO?
HUMANS ALIEN!
THAT'S WHAT I THINK!
WE CAN SEARCH FOR SOME KIND OF "NATURE" THAT'S MORE HOSPITABLE FOR HUMANS.
OF COURSE, IF WE GO INTO SPACE, WE'LL ALL LAST LONGER MORE ROOM UP THERE!
AND HUMANS HAVE BEEN PUTTERING AROUND EVER SINCE..
YES, YES...THEY FLEW OFF, LEAVING THEIR DISCARDS BEHIND.
HMM... YES...
SAINT MATTHEW
COME TO THINK OF IT, MAYBE HUMANS ARE JUST BIOROIDS USED BY THE ANCIENT ASTRO-NAUTS...
MY WALLET'S GOTTEN LIGHTER!!
YOU'RE NOT LOSING ANY WEIGHT...
GOD ONLY KNOWS...
SO, THEN... WHEN *ARE* YOU COMING HOME?
*SCRATCH SCRATCH
219

FX: D.OH

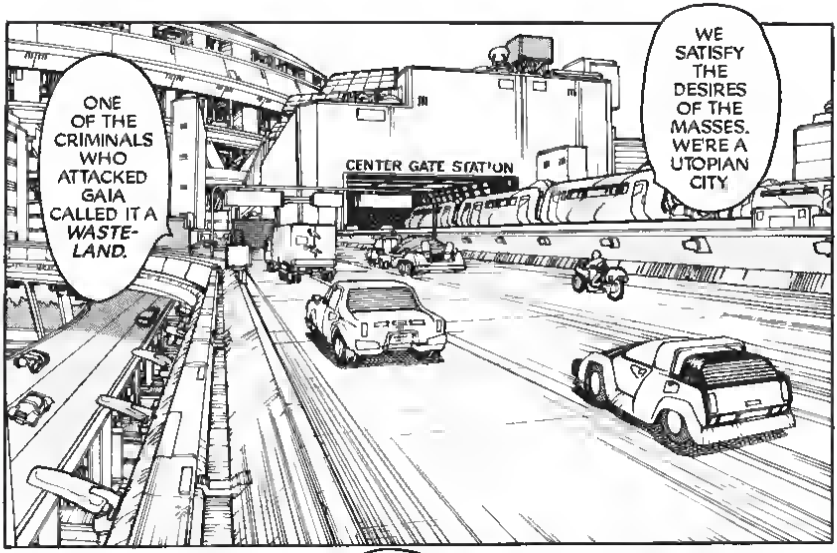

LUNATIC
BASILISK

HEE HEE!
UGH!
DIE, BAD GUY! POW! POW!
YAHOO!
KYU

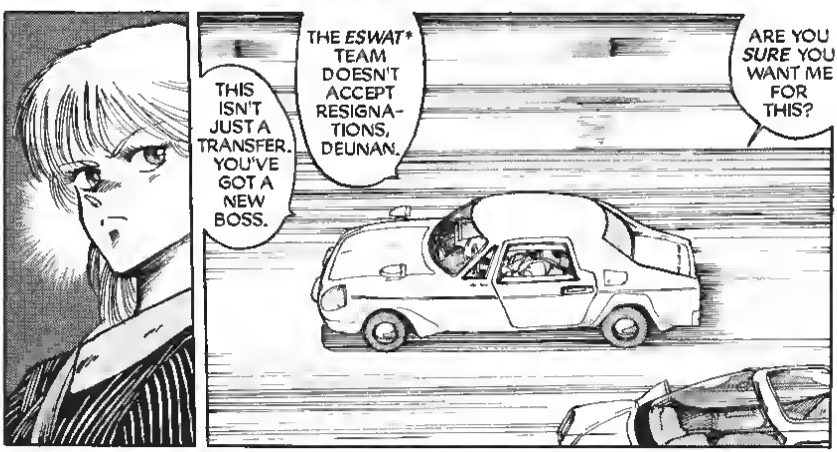
DEUNAN KNUTE?
CHAK
HOP IN.
WHAT A GRIP!
I RECOGNIZED YOU FROM YOUR FILE PHOTOGRAPHS.
I, ER, I'M PLEASED TO MEET YOU!
EH?
MY NAME'S NIKE.
BUT THERE'S ALSO A *PRACTICAL* REASON FOR PICKING YOU UP MYSELF. YOU WERE ON MY WAY--TO ATHENA'S OFFICE.
FROM A BROADER PERSPECTIVE, EVERYONE HERE IS A V.I.P.--EVERYONE IS ESSENTIAL.
HA!
B-BUT WHERE'S THE SECRET SERVICE? ARE YOU HER *DOUBLE*?!
NIKE...? YOU MEAN *CHIEF OF STAFF* NIKE?!
CHAK

WE'RE NOT *COMPLETELY* NAIVE, YOU KNOW.
AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT TERRORISTS...?
IGNORING CONDITIONS ON THE BACK STAIRS AND FRONT ENTRANCE... SHABBY EFFORTS TO NEGOTIATE SURRENDER... EXCESSIVE FORCE...
THE WATCHDOG COMMITTEE'S EAGER TO TEAR INTO LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT.
WE'VE MADE CRIMINOLOGY...
KYU
NO OPERATION EVER GOES BY THE BOOK.
I'LL ADMIT THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THE FINAL ASSAULT. BUT WE WERE UP AGAINST PROS!
SHRP
...A SCIENCE, TO PROVIDE CHECKS AND BALANCES AGAINST STATE AUTHORITY.

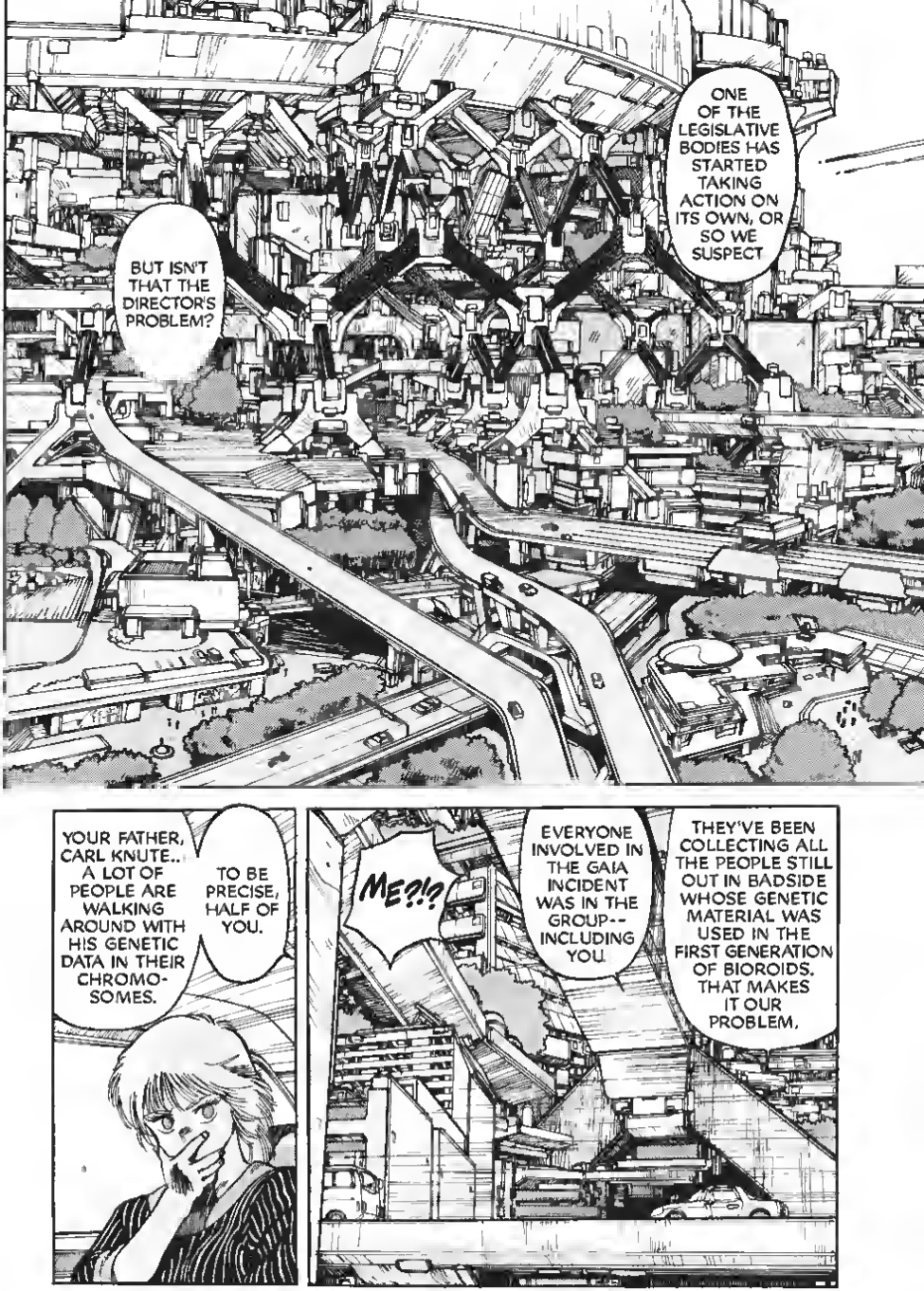
*criminology: the study of how intelligence, personality, way of life, environment, and such relate to the crimes of criminals


ONE OF THE CRIMINALS WHO ATTACKED GAIA CALLED IT A *WASTE-LAND.*
CENTER GATE STATION
WE SATISFY THE DESIRES OF THE MASSES. WE'RE A UTOPIAN CITY.

OR ARE YOU *REALLY* THAT PASSIVE...?
CAN SOMEONE SITTING ON THE SIDELINES UNDERSTAND THE GAME OF NATIONAL POLITICS? IS A TREE AN ACCURATE MODEL OF THE FOREST?


THIS ISN'T JUST A TRANSFER. YOU'VE GOT A NEW BOSS.
THE *ESWAT** TEAM DOESN'T ACCEPT RESIGNATIONS, DEUNAN.
ARE YOU *SURE* YOU WANT ME FOR THIS?

*ESWAT Extra Special Weapons And Tactics

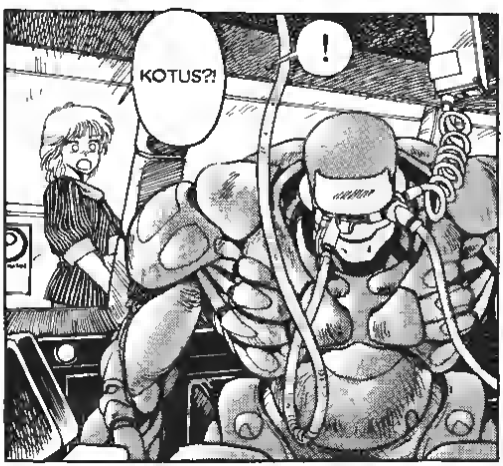

BUT ISN'T THAT THE DIRECTOR'S PROBLEM?
ONE OF THE LEGISLATIVE BODIES HAS STARTED TAKING ACTION ON ITS OWN, OR SO WE SUSPECT
YOUR FATHER, CARL KNUTE.. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE WALKING AROUND WITH HIS GENETIC DATA IN THEIR CHROMO-SOMES.
TO BE PRECISE, HALF OF YOU.
ME?!?
EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE GAIA INCIDENT WAS IN THE GROUP--INCLUDING YOU.
THEY'VE BEEN COLLECTING ALL THE PEOPLE STILL OUT IN BADSIDE WHOSE GENETIC MATERIAL WAS USED IN THE FIRST GENERATION OF BIOROIDS. THAT MAKES IT OUR PROBLEM.

HOW IS HE THESE DAYS, ANY-WAY?
I WONDER WHY HE REFUSED OUR INVITATION TO IMMIGRATE HERE.
MY FATHER WAS PART OF THIS...?
BUT, WHY ME? I'M JUST A PAWN OF THE LEGISLATURE, AREN'T I?
....
....
WHAT?
WE'RE BEING TAILED.
IF THEY'RE TERROR-ISTS, COUNT ME OUT. I'M NOT GETTING HURT IN ONE OF YOUR LITTLE WARS.
THANKS FOR THE GENER-OSITY!
WHY BE A PAWN IF YOU CAN BE A KNIGHT?
TRUTH IS THE STRONGEST WEAPON, HONESTY THE BEST STRATEGY.

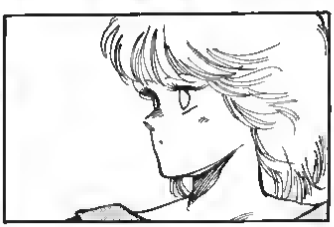
*FBI not the old American model but the highest priority police organization in Olympus. Charged with investigating bioroid activities.

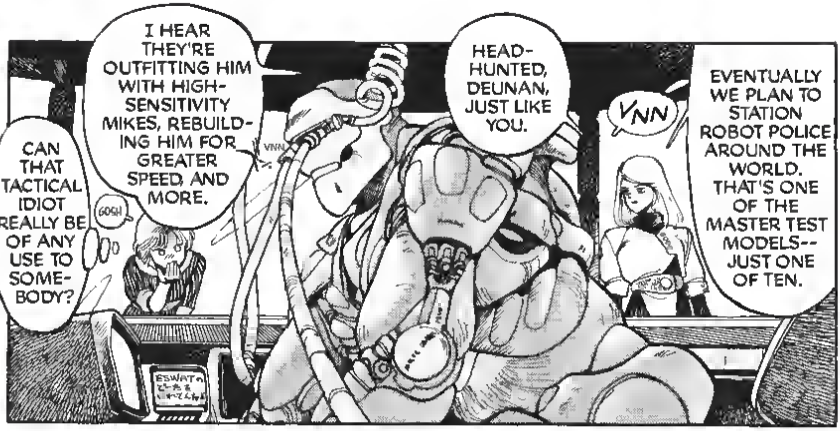
"UNAUTHORIZED VISITORS WILL BE SHOT AEGIS ACADEMY OF CRIME ELIMINATION"
ECES
ESWAT
VRM
SKRK
DAD, YOU S.O.B., WHAT DID YOU GET ME INTO...?
HE'S STAYING IN THE CIVVIE AREA. SO HOW DO YOU LIKE BEING A V.I.P., MS. KNUTE?
HE MUST BE OFF-DUTY...

YOU WAIT OUTSIDE. WATCH THE TRAINING OR SOME-THING.
I CAME HERE TO SHAKE OUR FBI FRIEND, BUT I MAY AS WELL PICK UP SOME DOCUMENTS WHILE I'M HERE.

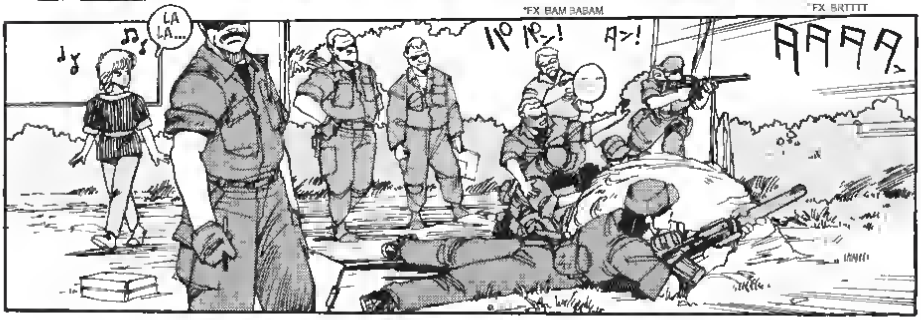

KOTUS?!
!

bdoo




I HEAR THEY'RE OUTFITTING HIM WITH HIGH-SENSITIVITY MIKES, REBUILDING HIM FOR GREATER SPEED, AND MORE.
HEAD-HUNTED, DEUNAN, JUST LIKE YOU.
VNN
EVENTUALLY WE PLAN TO STATION ROBOT POLICE AROUND THE WORLD. THAT'S ONE OF THE MASTER TEST MODELS--JUST ONE OF TEN.
CAN THAT TACTICAL IDIOT REALLY BE OF ANY USE TO SOMEBODY?
GOGH
VNN

...
!
TOGETHER FOR-EVER..?
I'LL BE JUST A MINUTE.
*TOK
*TOK
*TOK


LA LA...
*FX BAM BABAM
*FX BRTTTT

GET OVER BEHIND THE FIRING LINE AND WATCH THE SHOW WITH THE OTHER CORPSES.
ALL RIGHT, FEAZELL. YOU JUST DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY!
HUH?
*FLINCH
YEEK!

SUFF
NEVER LET GO! YOU GOT A BRICK FOR A BRAIN?
HYAH!
WAP
ZHFF
TIK
TIK
TIK
SEIKO
KLIK
ESWAT
HEY! WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?! THIS AIN'T NO PLACE FER KIDS!
YEAH, WE'RE SIMULATIN' A CYBORG HOSTAGE SITUATION. WE'RE GONNA--
HUH? YOU'RE USING BUSH-MASTERS IN-DOORS?
.....
DAMN YOU!!
WAP

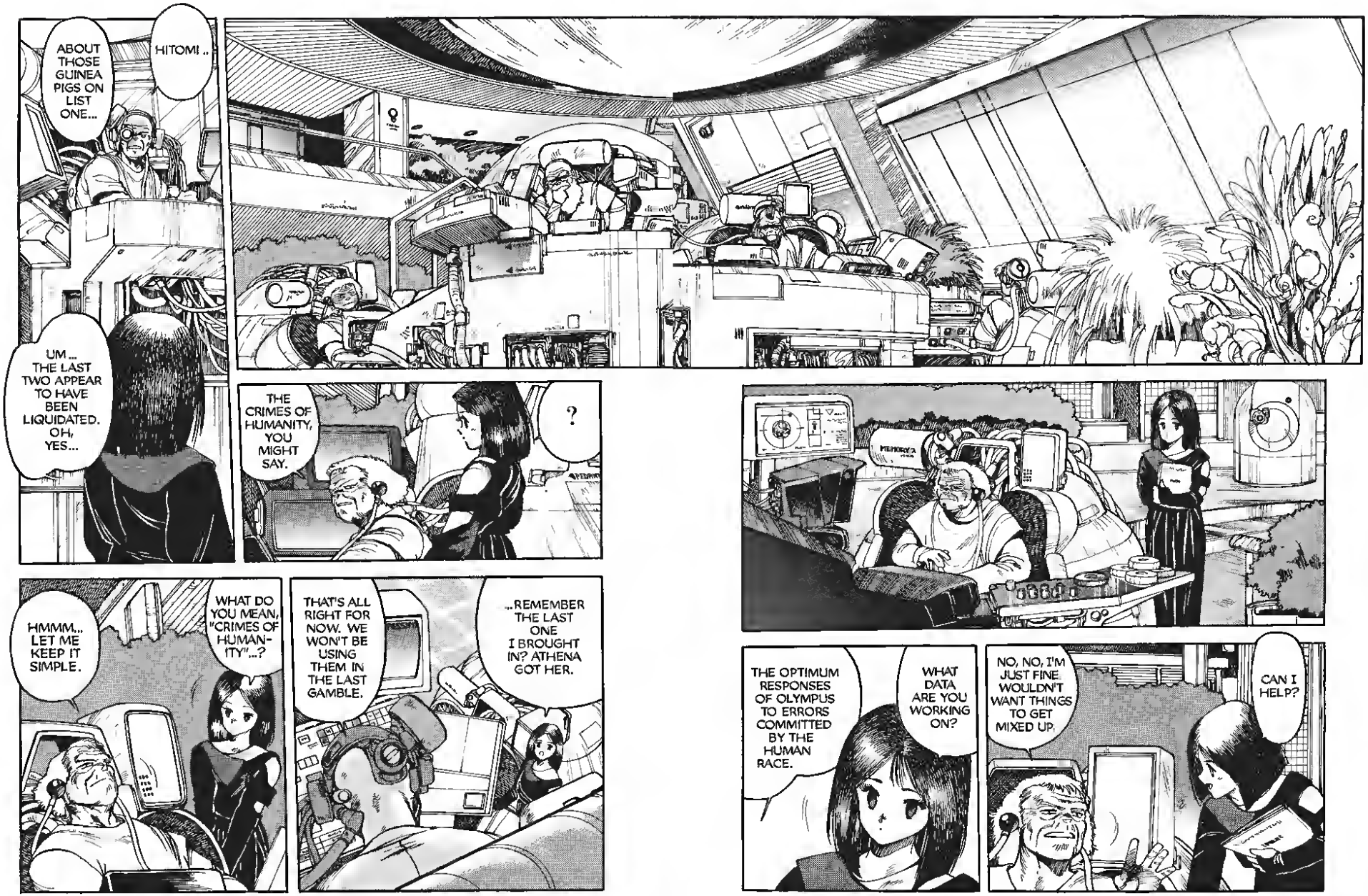
VERY WELL...
SHE'S HAD A LONGER CAREER THAN YOU, LIEUTENANT. FRONT LINE STUFF. BUT WE REALLY JUST WANT TO TIE HER DOWN-- YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE HER.
THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF JOKE, IS IT? YOU'RE REALLY SIGNING HER ON?
ESWAT
!
FX: WHOK
*FX: KSSH
HUH?
カチ
KL K
バフ
FWA

*FX: FDK
*FX: KRAK KRAK KRAK
UGH!
NO! WAIT! I WAS JUST...
SHKK
*KCHAK
DON'T MOVE!!
TRAIN-ING A ROOKIE?
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
TWITCH
AND JUST WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, HMM?
S.W.A.T.
*FX: ZA
FX: SHF SHF
!
THIS IS AL-READY... REGRET-TABLE.
NOW, DON'T GET ANY IDEAS...

YOU OKAY, SON?
OWW... SON OF A BITCH...
I DISLIKE BEING *STALKED.*
DON'T *YOU* GET ANY FUNNY IDEAS EITHER.
ぱっ
*DROP
HMPH
CLICK!
THAT OUGHT TO DO IT FOR INTRODUCTIONS FOR TODAY.
WE'LL SLIP OUT THROUGH THE ARCOZONE AND GO ON TO SEE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR ATHENA.
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU-- THIS IS LIEUTENANT TOWERS.
YOU'RE A TOUGH ONE, AREN'T YOU?
ALL THAT STEALTH TRAINING, *SHOT!* AND BY THAT DAMNED YOUNG BRAT!
OFUNNAN, SIR. HEH HEH
...
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! STOP GAWKING AND GET BACK TO WORK!

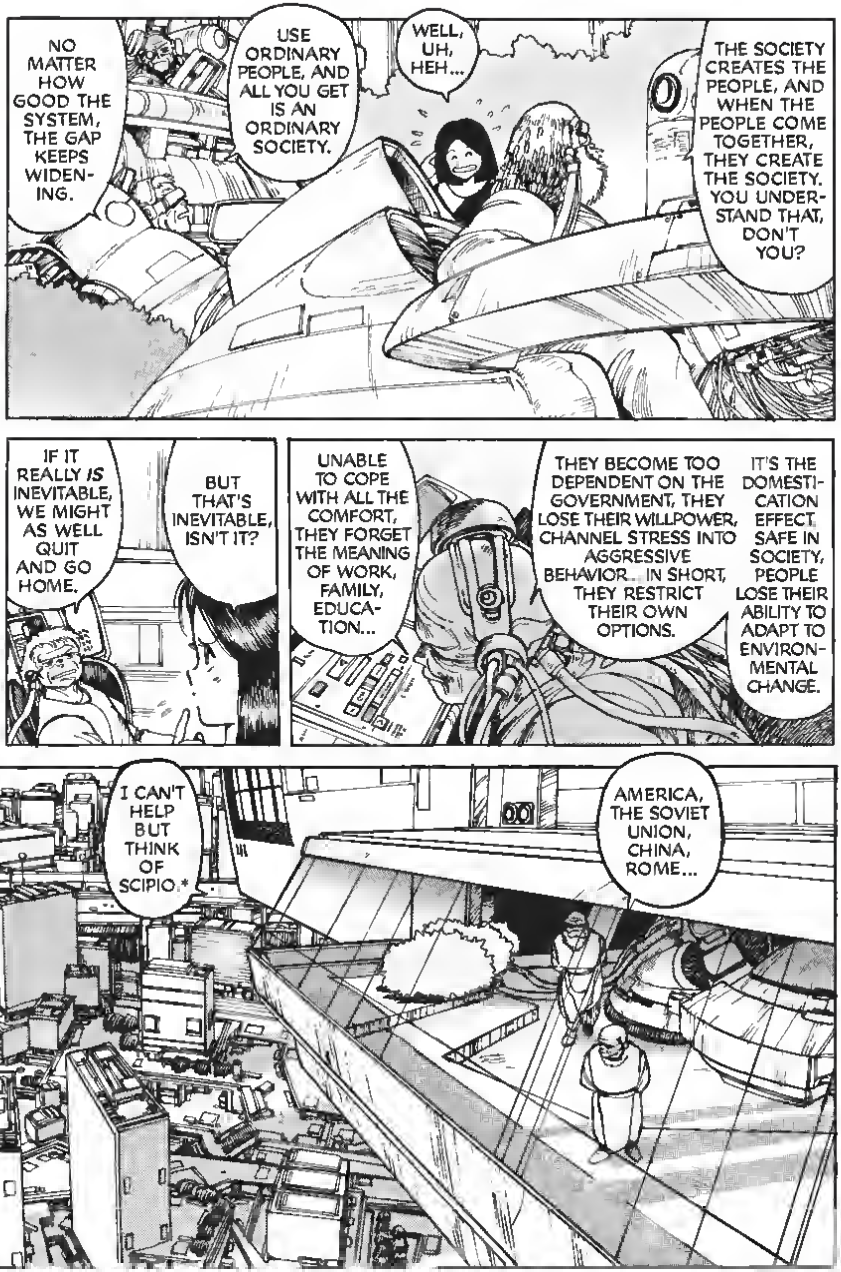
....
YOU'RE HARDLY WHAT I EXPECTED FROM READING YOUR FILE.
WELL, I GUESS MARKS-MEN COME IN MANY FORMS.
I'LL SEE TO THEM.
I HAVE HER TRANSFER PAPERS HERE...
ZERO COMBAT FATIGUE, NO OTHER PROLEMS-- WE CHECKED.
SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY MILITARY EXPERI-ENCE...?
.....
YES, MA'AM.

*FX KTAK
COME WITH ME.
THIS IS ALL *HIGHLY* IRREGULAR, BUT WE JUST HAPPEN TO BE SHORT AN ASSAULT MAN.
AND YOU'RE WEAK IN MARTIAL ARTS...
NO UNDER-WATER TRAINING? NO SKY DIVING?
MAYBE ON THE OUTSIDE.
ANY CHANCE SHE'S A DOUBLE AGENT?
GOOD ENOUGH
*FX RTAM
GOOD DAY.
HERE ARE THE MINUTES FOR THE WEEKLY MEETING, MA'AM.
THAT REMINDS ME. THE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEE WANTS A PANEL APPOINTED TO STUDY THE NEW POLICE PROPOSAL.
NOT AGAIN!
FX FUUUU
SO WHY ARE THEY TAKING THIS LYING DOWN?
BEEEP
WELL, WE'VE GOT OUR SURVEILLANCE IN PLACE, AND WE'VE ISOLATED THE THIRTY MOST DANGEROUS PEOPLE THE COUNCIL BROUGHT IN.

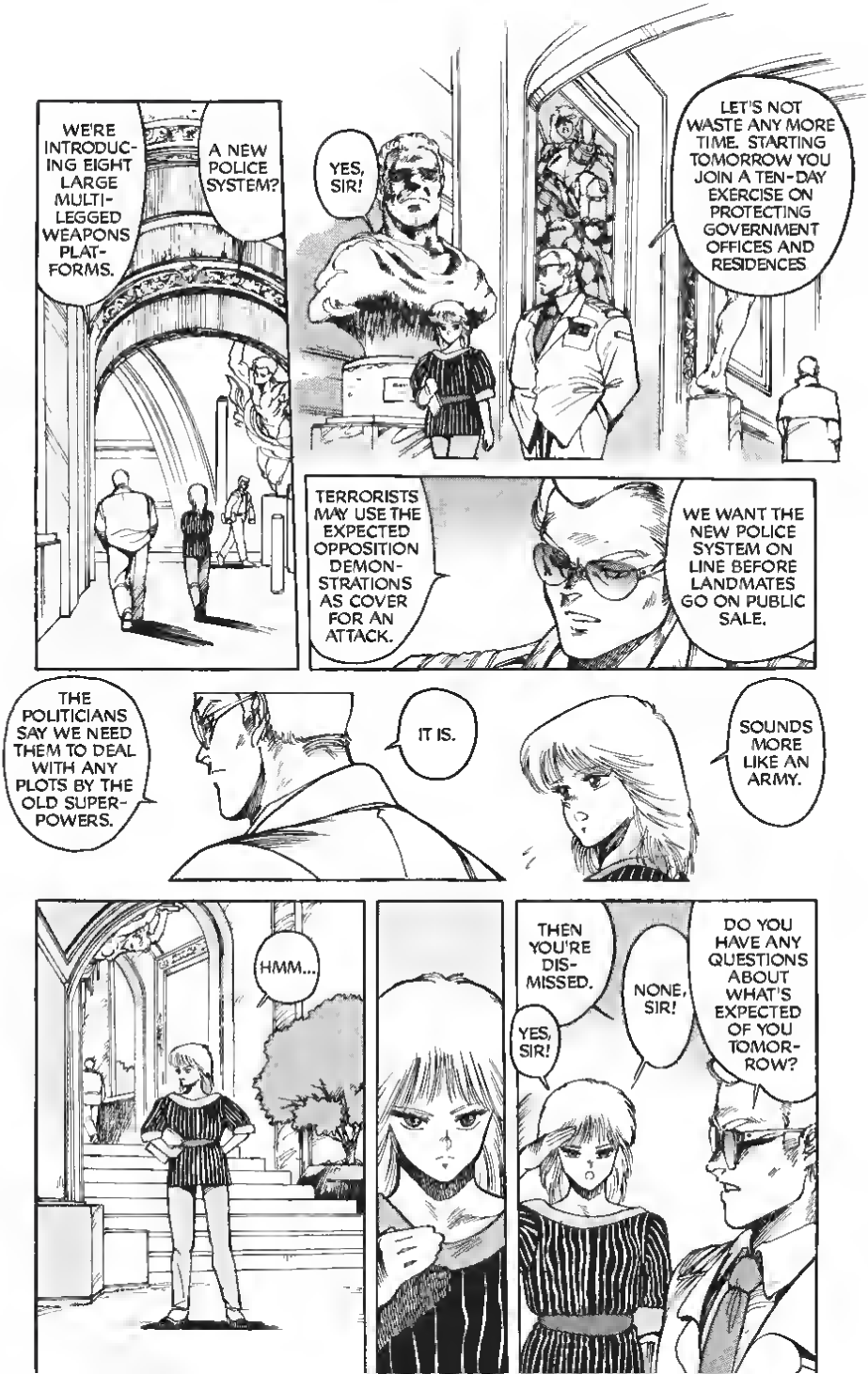

HITOMI ..
ABOUT THOSE GUINEA PIGS ON LIST ONE...
UM ... THE LAST TWO APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN LIQUIDATED. OH, YES...
?
THE CRIMES OF HUMANITY, YOU MIGHT SAY.
HMMM... LET ME KEEP IT SIMPLE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "CRIMES OF HUMANITY"...?
THAT'S ALL RIGHT FOR NOW. WE WON'T BE USING THEM IN THE LAST GAMBLE.
...REMEMBER THE LAST ONE I BROUGHT IN? ATHENA GOT HER.
THE OPTIMUM RESPONSES OF OLYMPUS TO ERRORS COMMITTED BY THE HUMAN RACE.
WHAT DATA ARE YOU WORKING ON?
NO, NO, I'M JUST FINE. WOULDN'T WANT THINGS TO GET MIXED UP.
CAN I HELP?

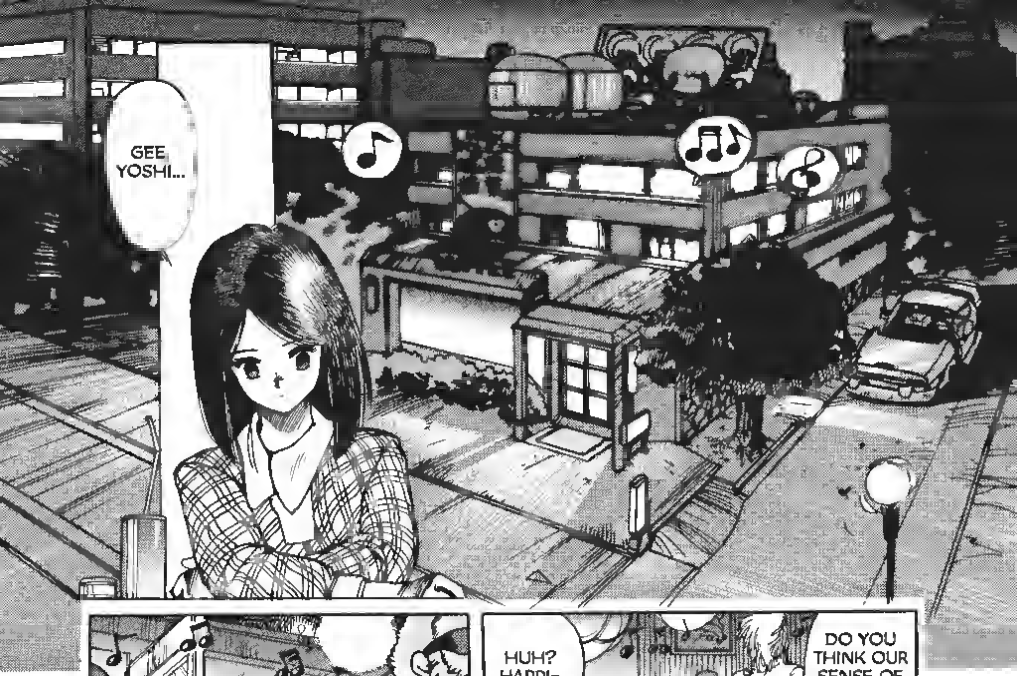
BUT ONLY A TEMPORARY ONE. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE SO-CALLED "PROGRESS" SINCE THE WAR BALANCES THE ACCOUNT.
IT'S IRONIC, BUT THE LAST WAR, NON-NUCLEAR, GAVE US A NEW LEASE ON LIFE.
I DON'T GET IT.
SPECIES-WIDE SUICIDE, BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE THE WHOLE WORLD WITH IT.
SUICIDE.
IT'S THEIR DISTORTED SENSE OF HAPPI-NESS...
I'D SAY THE CAUSE LIES IN MISTAKING EXTRAVAGANCE AND LAZINESS FOR "PEACE."
NOW YOU'RE TALKING *EFFECT*, NOT *CAUSE*.
THE CORE PROBLEM IS THAT YOU CAN'T HAVE A PERFECT SOCIETY WITHOUT PERFECT PEOPLE.
NO WONDER TURING TESTS* ARE SO POPULAR THESE DAYS.
IT'S JUST NOT SOME-THING WE BIOROIDS CAN UNDER-STAND.

*Turing tests developed by the British mathematician Alan Matheson Turing
A test using carefully designed questions to distinguish between computer programming logic and human thought processes

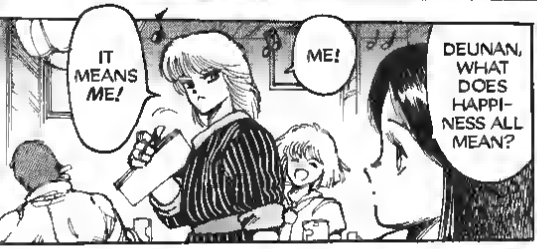

NO MATTER HOW GOOD THE SYSTEM, THE GAP KEEPS WIDENING.
USE ORDINARY PEOPLE, AND ALL YOU GET IS AN ORDINARY SOCIETY.
WELL, UH, HEH...
THE SOCIETY CREATES THE PEOPLE, AND WHEN THE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER, THEY CREATE THE SOCIETY. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU?
IF IT REALLY *IS* INEVITABLE, WE MIGHT AS WELL QUIT AND GO HOME.
BUT THAT'S INEVITABLE, ISN'T IT?
UNABLE TO COPE WITH ALL THE COMFORT, THEY FORGET THE MEANING OF WORK, FAMILY, EDUCATION...
THEY BECOME TOO DEPENDENT ON THE GOVERNMENT, THEY LOSE THEIR WILLPOWER, CHANNEL STRESS INTO AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR... IN SHORT, THEY RESTRICT THEIR OWN OPTIONS.
IT'S THE DOMESTICATION EFFECT. SAFE IN SOCIETY, PEOPLE LOSE THEIR ABILITY TO ADAPT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE.
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK OF SCIPIO.*
AMERICA, THE SOVIET UNION, CHINA, ROME...

*Scipio (the elder) - the famous Roman general. Upon seeing Hannibal's Carthage in flames he is said to have remarked "And someday Rome."

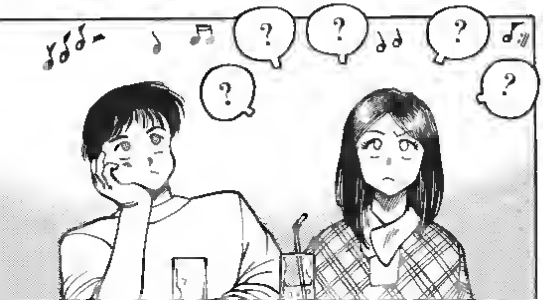

WE'RE INTRODUCING EIGHT LARGE MULTI-LEGGED WEAPONS PLATFORMS.
A NEW POLICE SYSTEM?
YES, SIR!
LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME. STARTING TOMORROW YOU JOIN A TEN-DAY EXERCISE ON PROTECTING GOVERNMENT OFFICES AND RESIDENCES
TERRORISTS MAY USE THE EXPECTED OPPOSITION DEMONSTRATIONS AS COVER FOR AN ATTACK.
WE WANT THE NEW POLICE SYSTEM ON LINE BEFORE LANDMATES GO ON PUBLIC SALE.
THE POLITICIANS SAY WE NEED THEM TO DEAL WITH ANY PLOTS BY THE OLD SUPERPOWERS.
IT IS.
SOUNDS MORE LIKE AN ARMY.
HMM...
THEN YOU'RE DISMISSED.
YES, SIR!
NONE, SIR!
DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT'S EXPECTED OF YOU TOMORROW?


GEE, YOSHI...

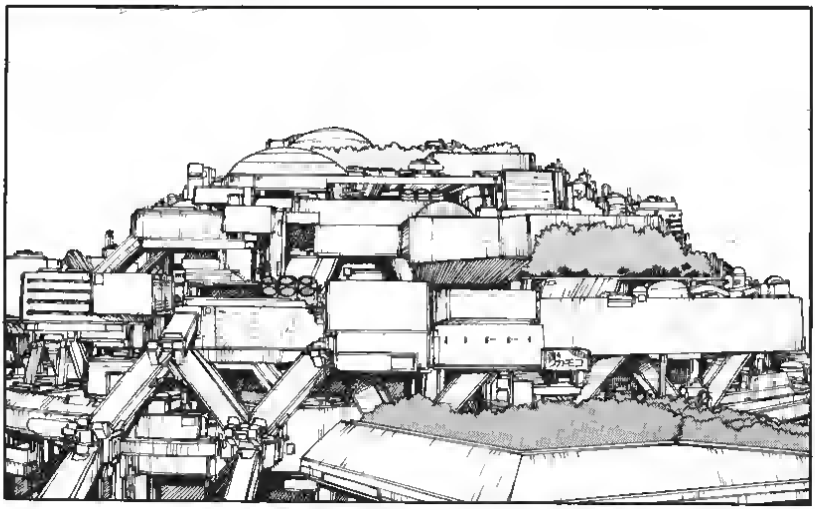
HUH? HAPPI-NESS??
DO YOU THINK OUR SENSE OF HAPPINESS IS "DISTOR-TED'. ?

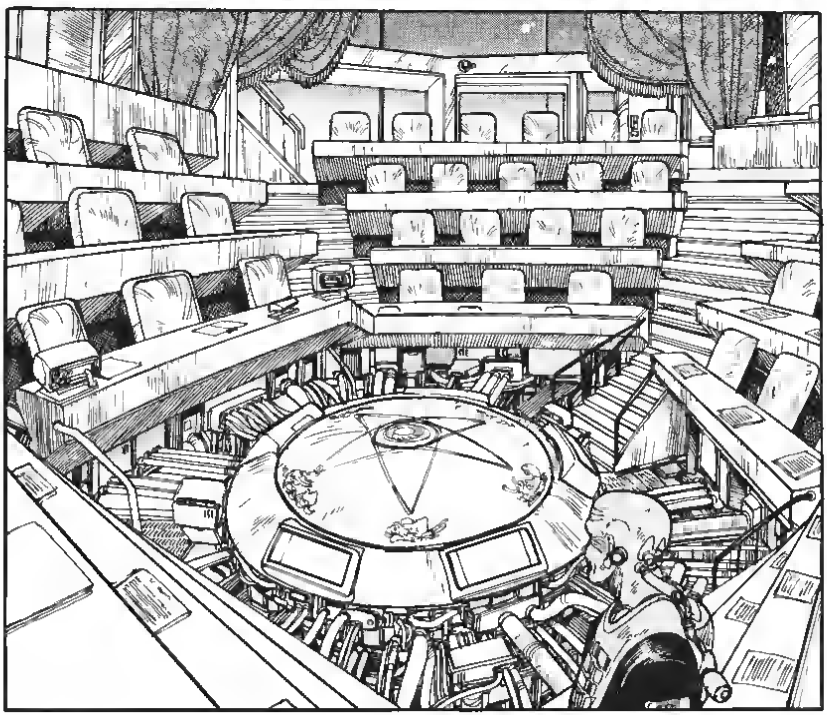

IT MEANS ME!
ME!
DEUNAN, WHAT DOES HAPPI-NESS ALL MEAN?

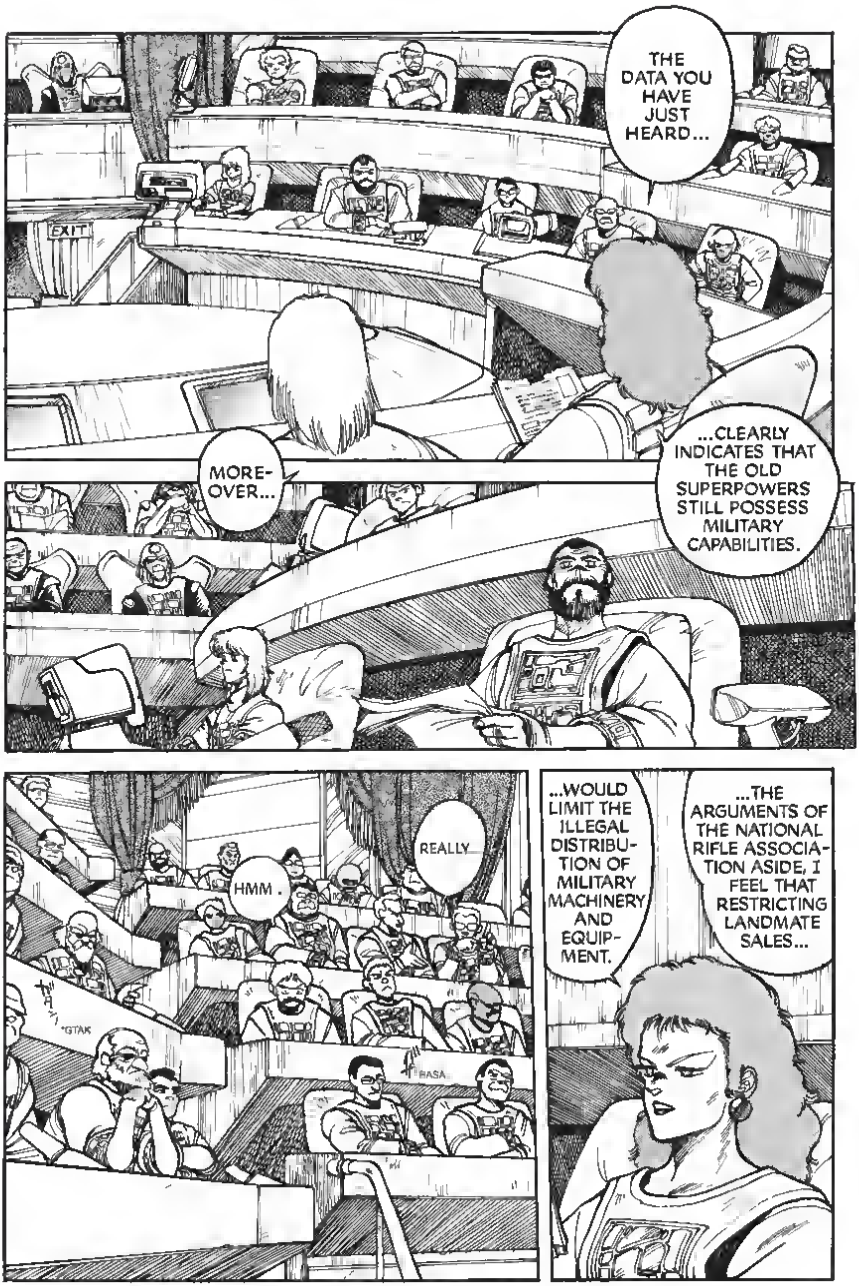
SORRY ABOUT THIS, BUT I'VE SET UP A BOOBY TRAP FOR BURGLARS IN MY ROOM. IF YOU WANT TO SEE ME, BETTER USE THE INTERCOM.
HITOMI...
WELL, THAT'S WHAT THOSE OLD GUYS SAY...


?
?
?
?
?

HFF
HFF
HFF
THERE.
FX FMP FMP
ぱぁ
ぱぁ
ZZ.
GOOD NIGHT, BRIAREOS.






THE DATA YOU HAVE JUST HEARD...
EXIT
...CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THE OLD SUPERPOWERS STILL POSSESS MILITARY CAPABILITIES.
MORE-OVER...
...WOULD LIMIT THE ILLEGAL DISTRIBU-TION OF MILITARY MACHINERY AND EQUIP-MENT.
...THE ARGUMENTS OF THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIA-TION ASIDE, I FEEL THAT RESTRICTING LANDMATE SALES...
REALLY
HMM .
*GTAK
*RASA

ARE THERE ANY FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO THE FIRST-PHASE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW ROBOTIC GUN PLATFORMS?
IF NOT, THE BILL, AS ORIGINALLY PROPOSED..
FX TNK TNK
トン トン!
NEXT?
..PASSES
..WE HAVE COMPLETED THE RELEVANT DATA ON HUMAN STRESS AND HAVE ARRIVED AT A SOLUTION.
CONCERNING HUMANS THAT THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION ORDERED PLACED UNDER OBSERVATION LAST SESSION..

I KNEW WE'D HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT SOMEDAY.
WE'D BEEN WORRIED ABOUT THIS.
JUST EXACTLY WHAT IS THIS PROPOSAL OF YOURS?
THE ONLY WORKABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM IS RIGHT HERE IN MY HAND. WE ASK THE LEGISLATURE TO DEBATE ON THIS PROPOSED LAW AS AN ISSUE OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.
IN A UTOPIAN SOCIETY, HUMAN STRESS CAN FOSTER A NEGATION OF UNDERLYING SOCIAL PHILOSOPHIES.
JUST AS *WE* DO OURSELVES, WE MUST REGULATE THE MINDS AND BODIES OF THE HUMAN RACE.
WE CALL IT *ELPIS**. A PROGRAM FOR THE OPTIMIZATION OF THE HUMAN RACE.
*FX: MURMUR
ザワ

*Elpis: personification of hope or expectation in Greek mythology. The last creature left in Pandora's box after all the ills of the world had escaped.

YOU REALLY SHOULD GET SOME STRESS MEASUREMENTS DONE AND CHECK IT OUT FOR METAL FATIGUE. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
GEE-ZUZ...
THIS IS COM-PLETELY WORN OUT.
WANT YOU
THIS THING'S A *MACHINE*, RIGHT?
WELL, YOU KNOW TESTS LIKE THAT...REAL MONEY-EATERS.
EXPEN-SIVE, I'LL BET...?
JUST CHANGE THE PARTS, OKAY?
GUESS I'LL SKIP THE TESTS...
...MAINTENANCE DETERMINES PERFORMANCE--*THAT* MUCH IS THE SAME. YOU BUY SAFETY IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO HOW MUCH MONEY YOU'RE WILLING TO SPEND
MAYBE... OF COURSE, IT'S A DIFFERENT DESIGN PHILOSOPHY, SO I CAN'T REALLY SAY BUT..
EVEN WITH *CYBORGS?*
WE MAY BE ABLE TO COPY THE HUMAN BODY, BUT WE STILL CAN'T MATCH HUMAN BIOLOGY.

BRIAREOS
FX: KCHIK FX: VZZZT
カチャ
COME ON! USE 'EM!
*FX: CH-K CHIK CHIK CHIK CH-K
I FEEL LIKE A TOY. HEH, HEH...
カチャカチャカチャカチャ
STOP YOUR BLATHERING AND TRY BLINKING!
WHAT A GOOD-LOOKIN' GUY! WISH I HAD MY NOSE AND CHEEKS BACK, THOUGH.
きゅる
きゅる
きゅる
FX: KYURU KYURU KYURU
*FX: HYUK HYUK
YOUR OLD EYES WERE ALL SCRATCHED TO HELL, SO BETTER SAY THANK YOU! I PUT IN RESIN PLATE REINFORCE-MENTS, TOO...
THOSE BIONIC EYES ARE THE WAY TO GO, EH? NEVER GET CLOUDY...
THEY WERE TEMPERED REINFORCED RAY BANS
YOU DON'T NEED TO!
I CAN'T WINK!
*FX: KCH -CHK CHK-K
HEY...! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
カチャ

THE NERVOUS SYSTEM MODS FOR YOUR ONBOARD WEAPONRY ARE A JOB FOR THE MECH TEAM!
YOUR RIGHT ARM!
HUH?
NONE A' MY DAMN BUSI-NESS--
DOCTOR, THE SCALPEL
FX HYUK HYUK
HEH... THE REAL FUN'S STILL TO COME.
うひひひ
A THOU-SAND THANK-YOUS, OH WISE ONE...!
MECH LINKAGES INTO A NERVOUS SYSTEM ARE ALWAYS TOO UNSTABLE...
HMM
CAN'T FIGHT WHEN I'M SO HEAVY-- ANYWAY, I'M A COWARD.
ARE YOU INVOLVED IN SOME KIND OF WAR ..?
ALL THAT MECH STUFF'S TOO DIFFERENT FROM THE BIO-SYSTEMS... AWKWARD!
I SUPPOSE NO ONE CARES WHAT I THINK, BUT I STILL DON'T APPROVE.
NO, IT'S NOT FOR ANYTHING STUPID LIKE THAT.
*CHAK
BAD FOR MY IMAGE...
GASHUN!
WHY FIGHT AT ALL THEN? FOR YOUR COUNTRY? JUSTICE? SOME-THING LIKE THAT?
THAT'S MY JOB.
UH... I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'D LIKE TO OIL ME...?

FOR AN EXAMPLE, THE HUMAN RACE...
...HAS *ALWAYS* WORKED PRIMARILY TO BOOST THE MATERIAL GAINS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
AL-WAYS!
OF COURSE, MATERIAL GOODS ARE NECESSARY...
BUT MAN IS STILL AT HEART A WEAK ORGANISM. EVEN IF HE *DOES* USE SCIENCE AS A WEAPON TO FIGHT THE NATURAL UNIVERSE.
THEY'VE MADE AN AESTHETIC OF CONSUMPTION, AND SATISFIED COUNTLESS MATERIAL WANTS...
HE CAN REALLY ONLY FUNCTION WHEN HE'S CREATED AN ENTIRE SOCIETY.
BUT MATERIAL AFFLUENCE ELIMINATES THE NEED FOR COOPERATIVE ACTION. IT INVITES ISOLATION AND THE BREAKDOWN OF THE GROUP.
AND *FURTHER-MORE*...

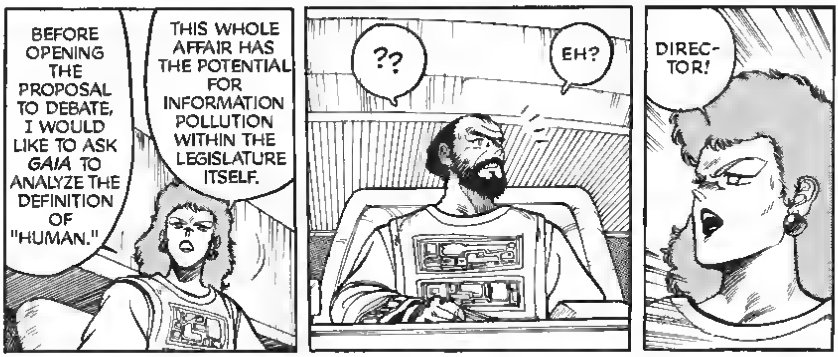
*FX. MURMUR MURMUR MURMUR
NEWS BLACK-OUT.
YES, MA'AM?
YES, MA'AM!
MOREOVER, THE ALTERNA-TIVE TECH-NOLOGIES* NOW AT OUR DISPOSAL ARE INAD-EQUATE TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE!
*FX. MURMUR MURMUR
I DO NOT EXAGGER-ATE--THIS PROCESS IS *ALREADY* POSING A MAJOR THREAT!
...AS THE AMOUNT OF LABOR AND ENERGY CONSUMED BY THE INDIVIDUAL HAS RISEN, MAN HAS FORGOTTEN TO PRESERVE ANY KIND OF BALANCE WITH NATURE.
beep
WE MUST FIRST ELIMINATE OR CORRECT CRIMINAL THINKING...
THINKING ONLY OF THEIR OWN COUNTRY'S INTERESTS AND NOT...
BUT DON'T TAKE ANY DIRECT ACTION AGAINST THE COUNCIL ITSELF.
SEAL OFF THE LEGISLATIVE BLOCK. DISARM THE COUNCIL'S BODY-GUARDS
YES, MA'AM!
COLO-NEL!
THE EARTH WILL BECOME AN INCREASINGLY INHOSPITABLE PLACE FOR MANKIND!
...BUT IF WE DO *NOTHING,* BEFORE LONG SOCIETY ITSELF WILL CEASE TO FUNCTION!

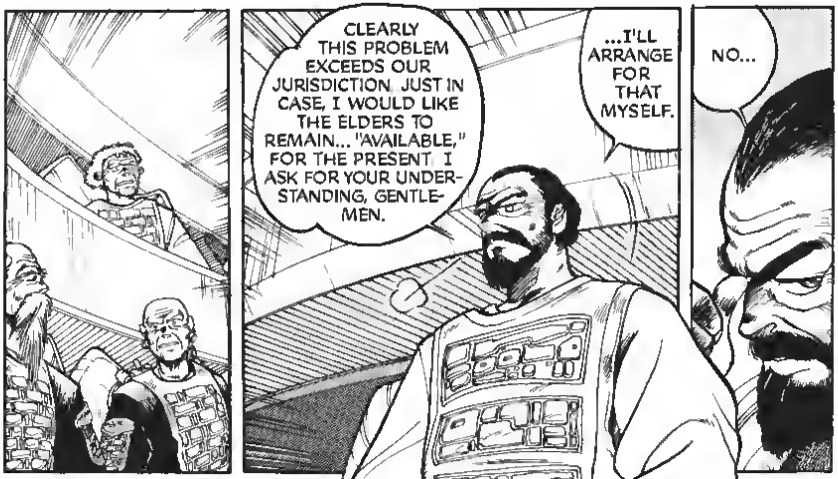
*technology predicated on the harmonious coexistence of man and nature

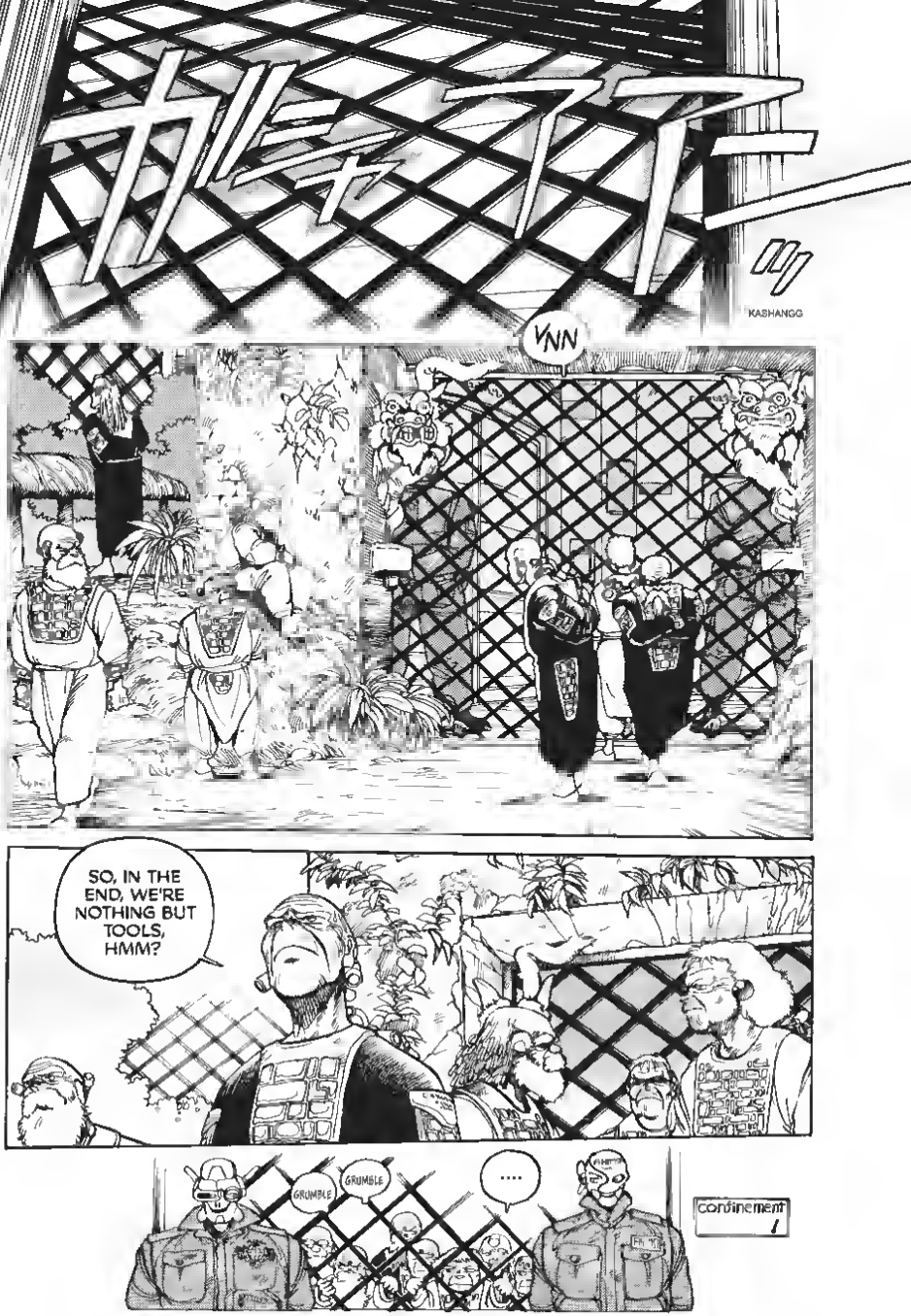
FX: MURMUR MURMUR MURMUR MURMUR
...IN THE SAME LIGHT AS ADMINISTERING EXPERIMENTAL MEDICINE TO A DYING PATIENT.
WE MUST LOOK AT THE CONCEPT OF APPLYING BIOROID SYSTEMS TO HUMAN BEINGS...
FX: MURMUR MURMUR MURMUR
YET THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID WALKING THE PATH TO COLLAPSE AND DESTRUCTION IS TO CREATE HUMAN BEINGS WHO ARE IN A STATE OF DYNAMIC EQUILIBRIUM, UNIFYING REASON AND EMOTION!
DO NOT MISTAKE OUR PROPOSAL FOR DOMINATION OR BRAINWASHING! WE WILL NOT FORCE IT ON ANYONE!
SILENCE!
EVERYONE, PLEASE!
WE NEED INDEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS WHO CAN FEED BACK INTO THE HARMONY OF THE WHOLE. WE NEED INDIVIDUALS WITH THE ABILITY TO MOLD A UTOPIA AND LIVE IN IT!

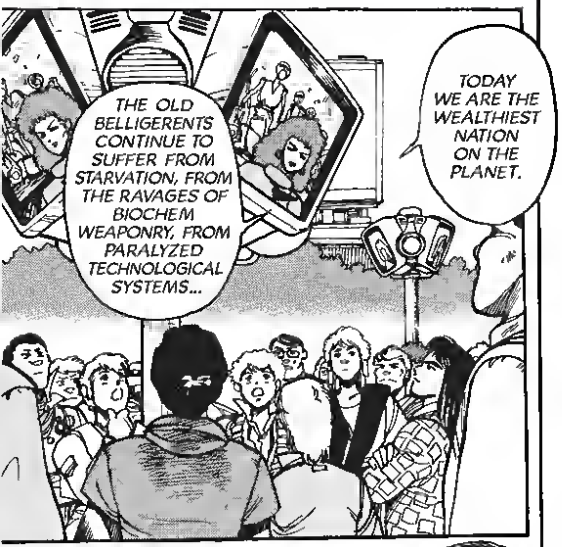
WE SHOULD NOT SIMPLY STAND BACK AND WATCH MANKIND DESTROY ITSELF.
THAT IS *EXACTLY* THE POINT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE DEBATED BY THIS HOUSE AS A MATTER OF THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.
ISN'T IT A FORM OF REBELLION AGAINST THE HUMAN RACE?!
DOESN'T THIS CONCEPT OF YOURS OVERSTEP THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN US AND THE HUMANS?
WHAT WE NEED NOW IS A GATHERING OF INDIVIDUAL UNITS THAT CAN REGULATE THE *RANGE* OF THEIR EQUALITY!!
FREEDOM BREEDS ISOLATION! THAT'S THE LESSON OF HUMAN HISTORY! EQUALITY CREATES *NOTHING* BUT THE DEATH OF THE INDIVIDUAL!
THE PROBLEM ISN'T WITH CONTENT OR DETAILS! IT'S WITH THE *WHOLE INTENT* OF YOUR PLAN!
HUMANS ARE *DIFFERENT* FROM US!!
EDUCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL SHOULD *IDEALLY* BE PERFORMED AT A MOLECULAR LEVEL...
WE SPEAK OF DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL THAT COULD GENERATE MATERIAL AFFLUENCE AS A NATURAL BY-PRODUCT.

TAKE THE DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE CRADLE TO AN EXTREME, AND ALL YOU GET IS *DEATH!! WHAT KIND OF UTOPIA IS THAT?!*
LISTEN TO ME!! PEOPLE HAVE BECOME TOO MATERIALISTIC! THEIR NETWORKS ARE DISINTEGRATING-- THEY'RE FORGETTING EVEN *HOW* TO NETWORK!

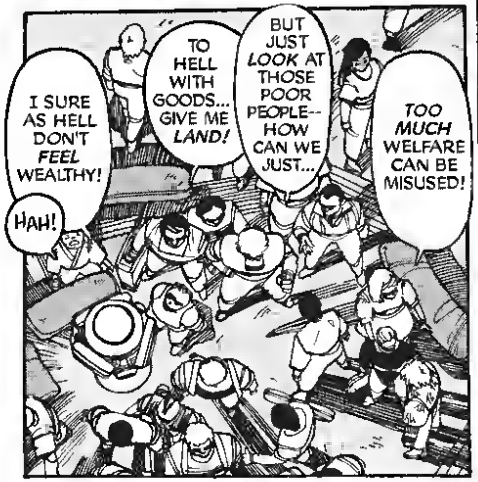

BEFORE OPENING THE PROPOSAL TO DEBATE, I WOULD LIKE TO ASK *GAIA* TO ANALYZE THE DEFINITION OF "HUMAN."
THIS WHOLE AFFAIR HAS THE POTENTIAL FOR INFORMATION POLLUTION WITHIN THE LEGISLATURE ITSELF.
??
EH?
DIREC-TOR!

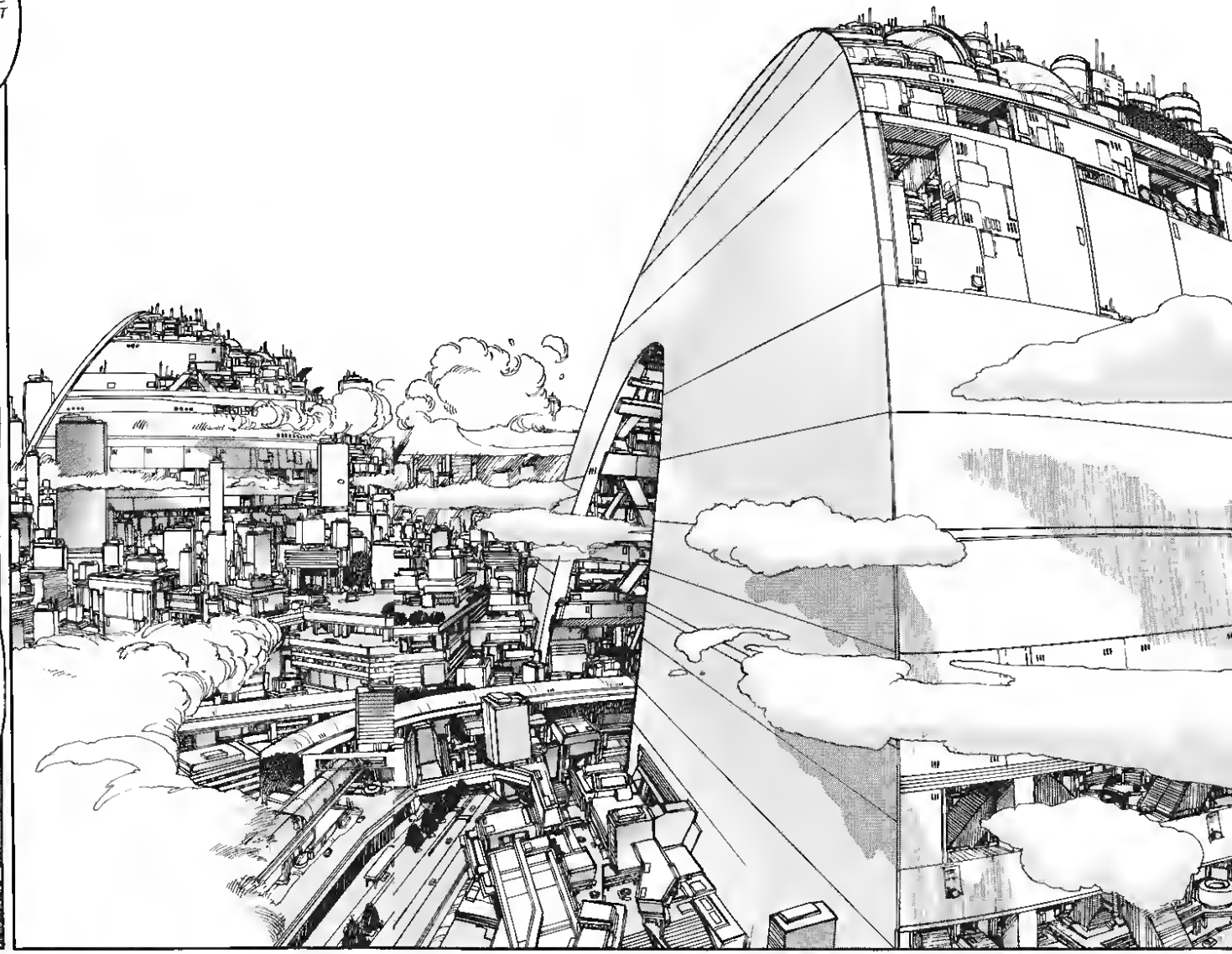

CLEARLY THIS PROBLEM EXCEEDS OUR JURISDICTION. JUST IN CASE, I WOULD LIKE THE ELDERS TO REMAIN... "AVAILABLE," FOR THE PRESENT. I ASK FOR YOUR UNDER-STANDING, GENTLE-MEN.
...I'LL ARRANGE FOR THAT MYSELF.
NO...

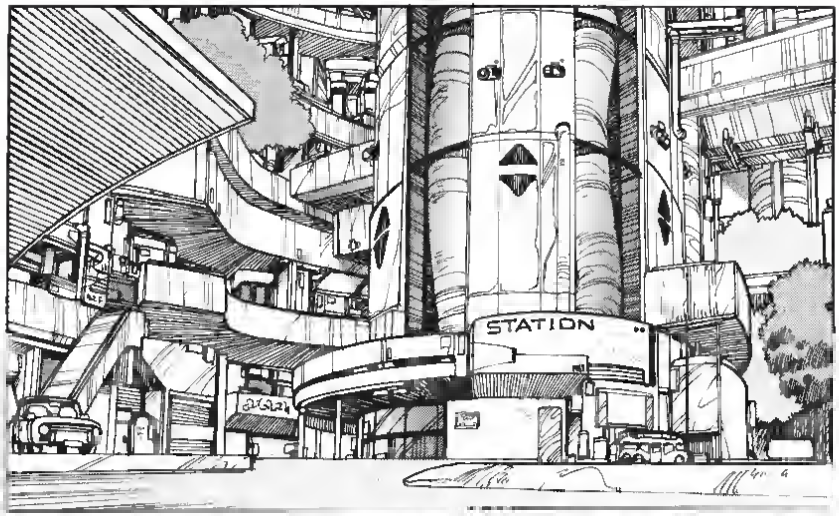

カシャアア
KASHANGG
VNN
SO, IN THE END, WE'RE NOTHING BUT TOOLS, HMM?
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
....
confinement


TODAY WE ARE THE WEALTHIEST NATION ON THE PLANET.
THE OLD BELLIGERENTS CONTINUE TO SUFFER FROM STARVATION, FROM THE RAVAGES OF BIOCHEM WEAPONRY, FROM PARALYZED TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS...

WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT? TAX HIKE?
THEY ALREADY TAX EVERY-THING IN SIGHT...


TOO MUCH WELFARE CAN BE MISUSED!
BUT JUST LOOK AT THOSE POOR PEOPLE-- HOW CAN WE JUST...
TO HELL WITH GOODS... GIVE ME LAND!
I SURE AS HELL DON'T FEEL WEALTHY!
HAH!

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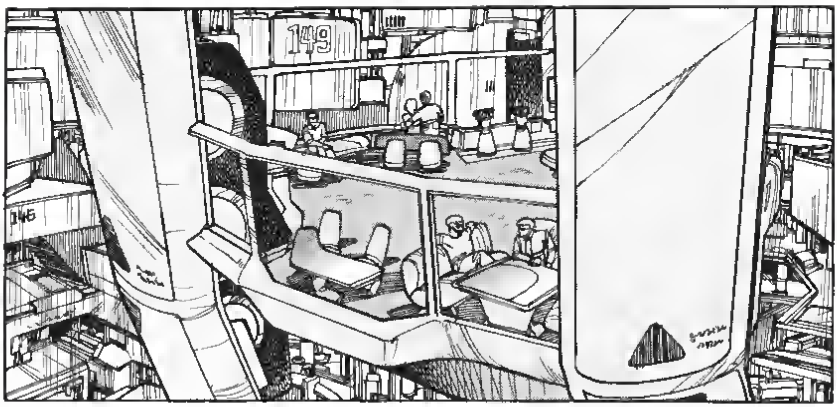
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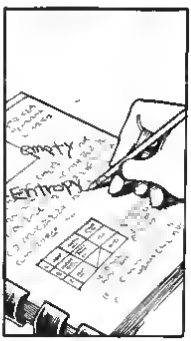
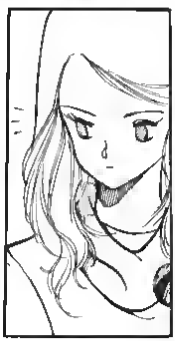
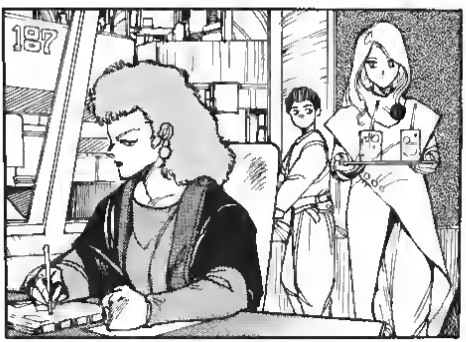

Entropy

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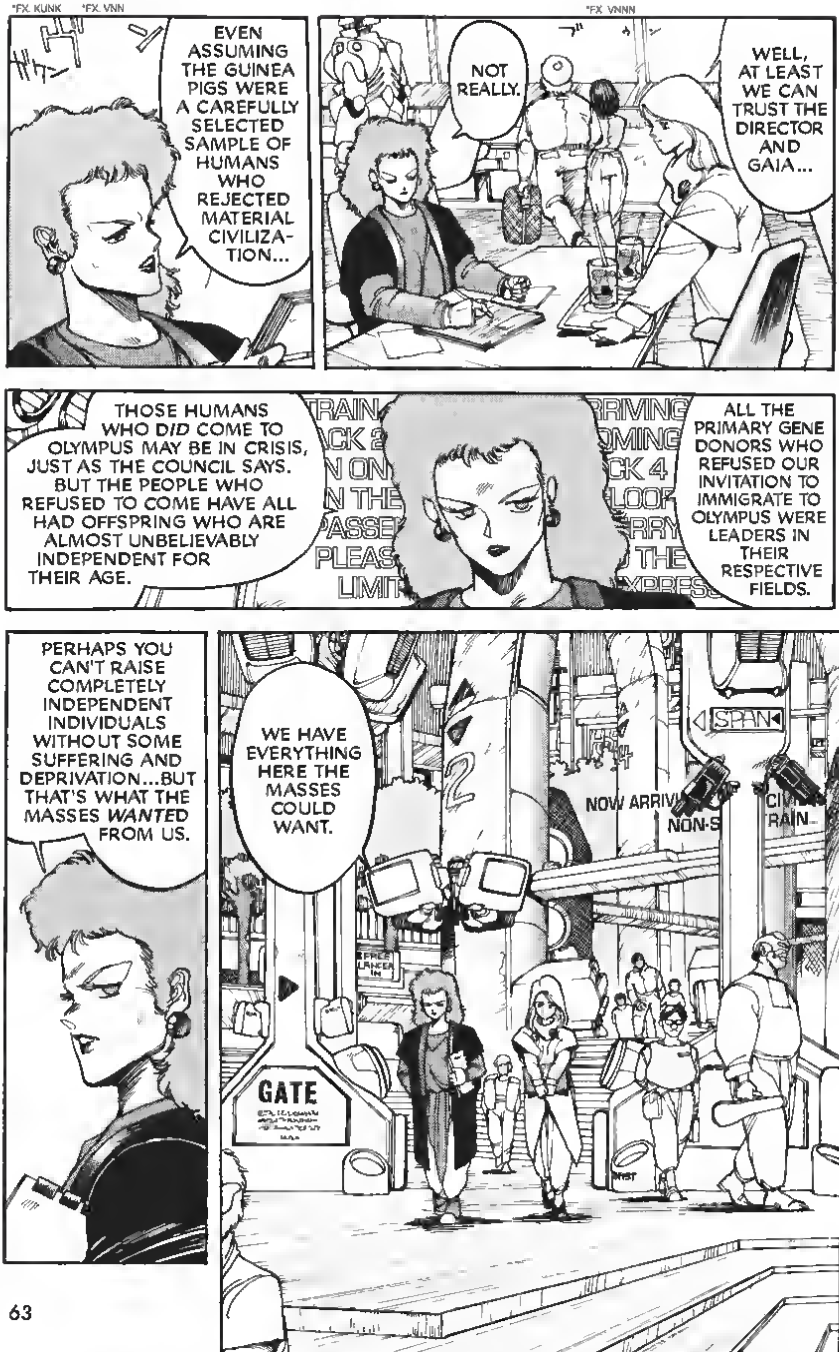
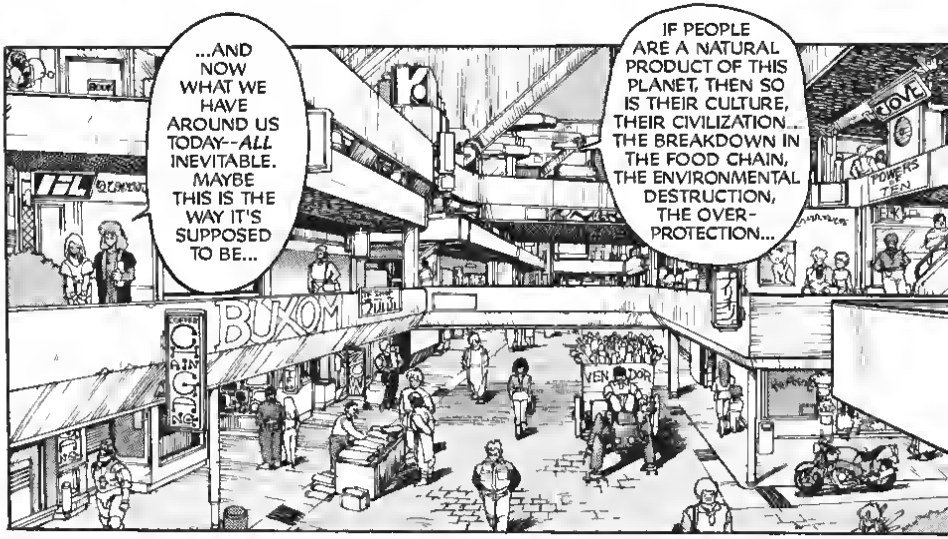
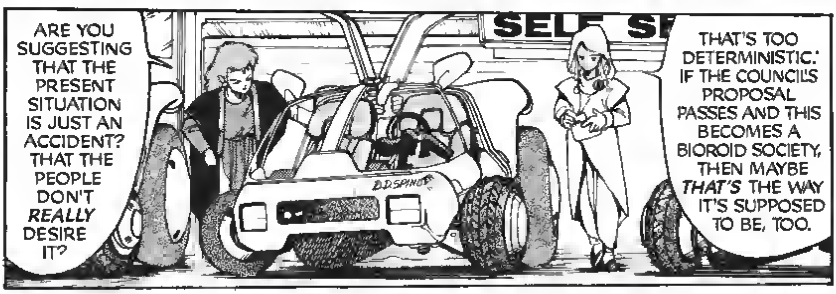
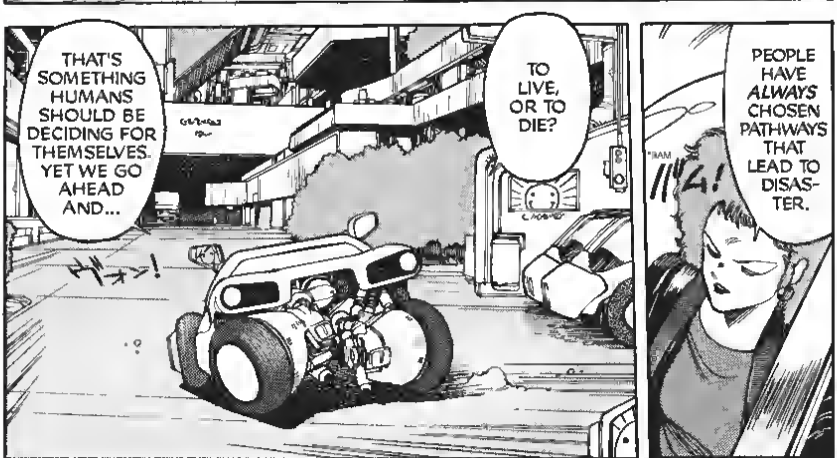

*FX. KUNK
*FX. VNN
EVEN ASSUMING THE GUINEA PIGS WERE A CAREFULLY SELECTED SAMPLE OF HUMANS WHO REJECTED MATERIAL CIVILIZATION...
*FX. VNNN
NOT REALLY.
WELL, AT LEAST WE CAN TRUST THE DIRECTOR AND GAIA...
THOSE HUMANS WHO DID COME TO OLYMPUS MAY BE IN CRISIS, JUST AS THE COUNCIL SAYS. BUT THE PEOPLE WHO REFUSED TO COME HAVE ALL HAD OFFSPRING WHO ARE ALMOST UNBELIEVABLY INDEPENDENT FOR THEIR AGE.
ALL THE PRIMARY GENE DONORS WHO REFUSED OUR INVITATION TO IMMIGRATE TO OLYMPUS WERE LEADERS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS.
PERHAPS YOU CAN'T RAISE COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT SOME SUFFERING AND DEPRIVATION...BUT THAT'S WHAT THE MASSES WANTED FROM US.
WE HAVE EVERYTHING HERE THE MASSES COULD WANT.
SPAN
GATE


...AND NOW WHAT WE HAVE AROUND US TODAY--*ALL* INEVITABLE. MAYBE THIS IS THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE...
IF PEOPLE ARE A NATURAL PRODUCT OF THIS PLANET, THEN SO IS THEIR CULTURE, THEIR CIVILIZATION... THE BREAKDOWN IN THE FOOD CHAIN, THE ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION, THE OVER-PROTECTION...
BUKOM
VENDOR
POWERS TEN


ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION IS JUST AN ACCIDENT? THAT THE PEOPLE DON'T *REALLY* DESIRE IT?
THAT'S TOO DETERMINISTIC.* IF THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL PASSES AND THIS BECOMES A BIOROID SOCIETY, THEN MAYBE *THAT'S* THE WAY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE, TOO.


THAT'S SOMETHING HUMANS SHOULD BE DECIDING FOR THEMSELVES. YET WE GO AHEAD AND...
TO LIVE, OR TO DIE?
PEOPLE HAVE *ALWAYS* CHOSEN PATHWAYS THAT LEAD TO DISAS-TER.
"HAM
114!

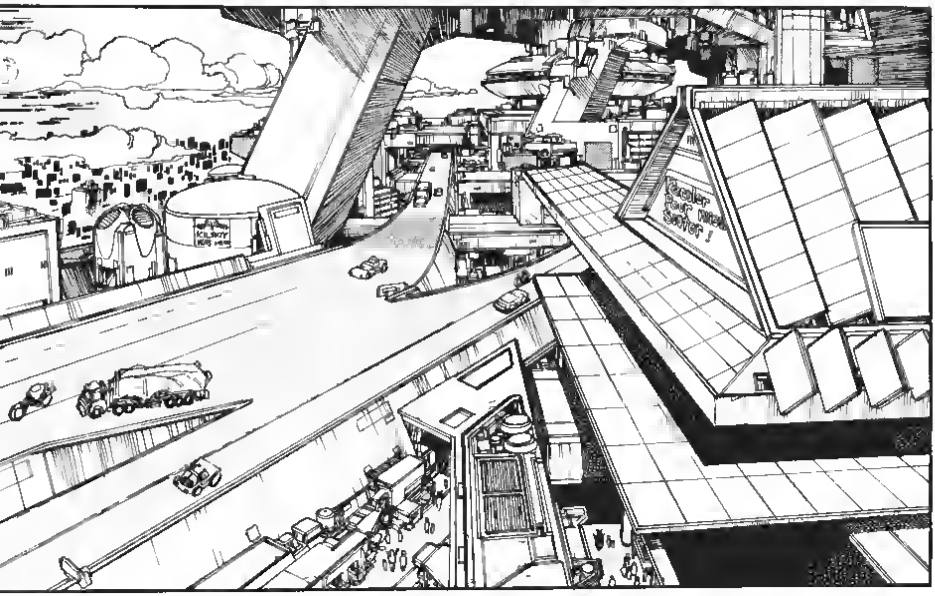
[FX: VRMMM

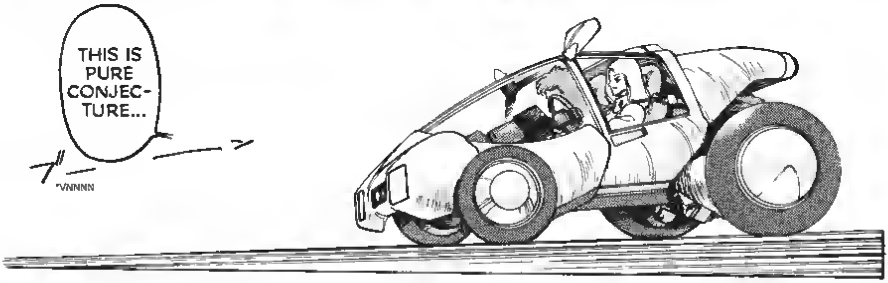
*determinism: the school of thought that future circumstances are determined exactly by causal relationships. That they are determined no more that partially due to free will and quantum mechanical accidents is indeterminism. The Greeks originated this argument.

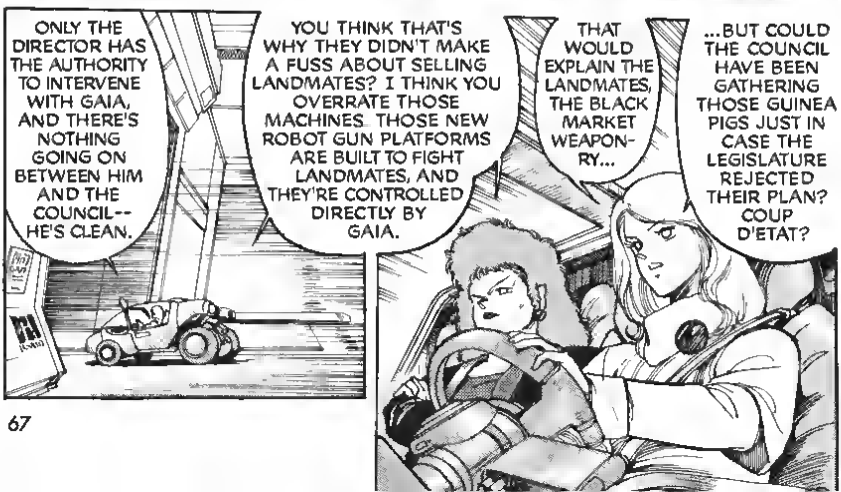
WE EX-PECTED TOO MUCH OF THEM.
THE PROBLEM IS WHETHER OR NOT YOU CONSIDER EXTENDING BIO-ROID SYSTEMS TO PEOPLE TO BE HIJACKING THE HUMAN RACE.
ATHENA AND THE DIRECTOR SEEM TO SEE IT THAT WAY, AT LEAST.
THE SOCIAL DESTRUC-TION OF A SOCIAL ANIMAL?
DOMESTI-CATE A SPECIES AND YOU CHANGE ITS NATURAL CHARAC-TER.
IN A SENSE, WE'RE MODELS CREATED BY MATERIAL CIVILIZATION. BUT NOW, ALL THESE PEOPLE RUSHING TO DESTRUCTION ARE BECOMING "PRO-FESSIONAL" HUMANS. OUR PROPOSAL IS THE *ONLY* WAY TO SAVE THE RACE.
IF WE WERE DIFFERENT SPECIES, MAYBE. BUT WE'RE JUST TRYING TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RACE.
OUR GAMBLE BECOMES MORE RISKY...
MAY I INTER-RUPT?
STILL, I CAN'T HELP BUT REMEMBER ***MURPHY'S LAW...***

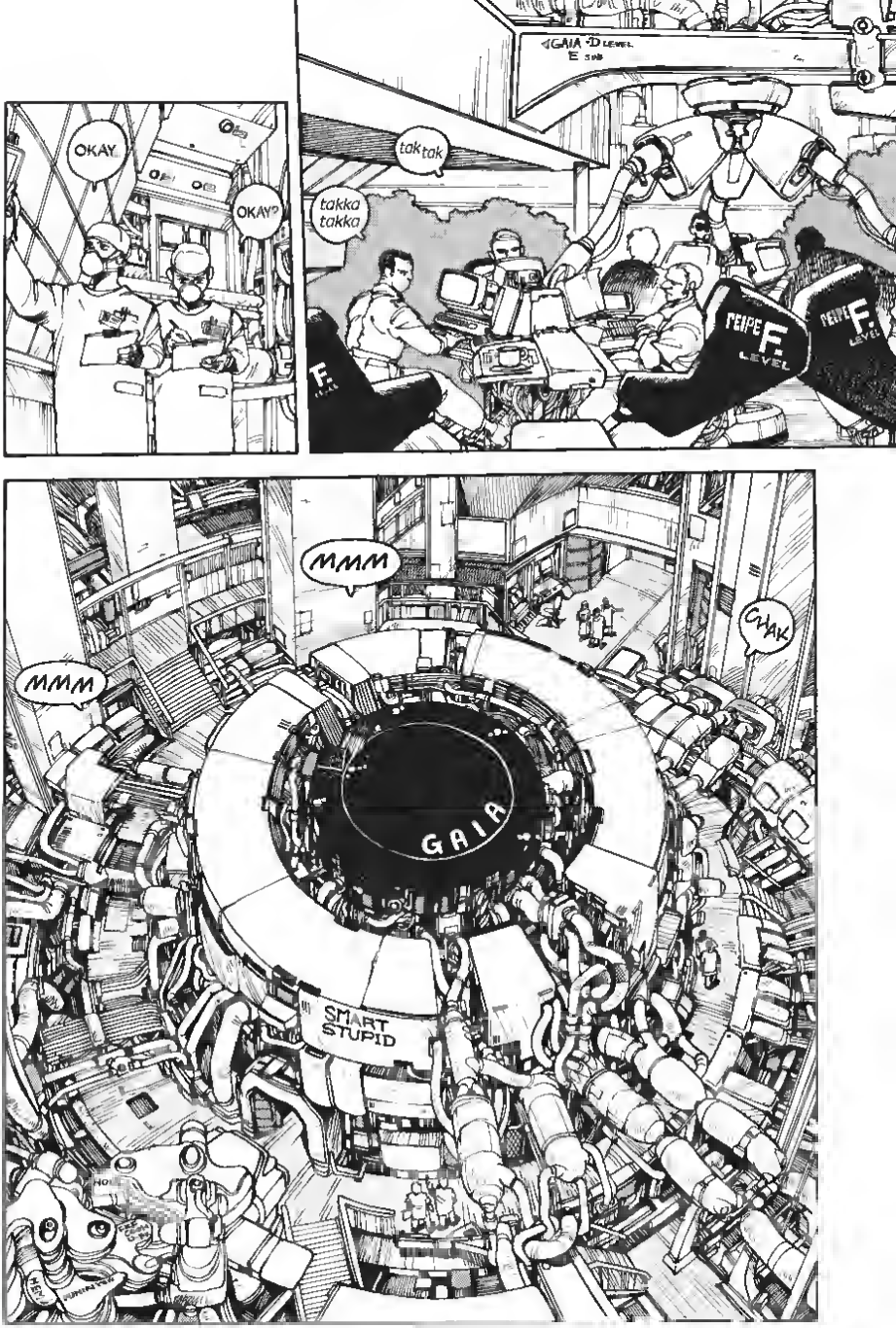
*Murphy's Law: a pessimistic, but not totally undeniable, law of dubious authenticity which states "whatever can go wrong, will go wrong."

BUT NO COMPUTER CAN REPLICATE STILL-UNKNOWN PORTIONS OF THE HUMAN CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM--AND THAT'S WHY WE SEVEN WERE SELECTED TO PUT BEHIND US THE INDIVIDUALITY AND POSSESSIVENESS OF NORMAL LIFEFORMS AND FUNCTION AS GAIA'S CENTRAL *CPU.*
MOREOVER... *GAIA* WAS BUILT TO BE AN IMPARTIAL MEDIATOR BETWEEN HUMANS AND BIOROIDS.
THEY MADE US TO BE RELIABLE, UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED THIRD PARTIES IN HUMAN DISPUTES, INVESTED WITH ABSOLUTE TRUST.
WE BIOROIDS WERE CREATED DURING THE INITIAL PLANNING FOR THE OLYMPUS PROJECT BY THE PACIFIST LEADERS OF THE WORLD...
THAT TOTALLY OBJECTIVE, TOTALLY UNBIASED, TOTALLY IRRESPONSIBLE *POCKET CALCULATOR?!*
WITHOUT *US?!*
HMM!
AND THE DIRECTOR'S GOING TO HAVE GAIA JUDGE OUR PROPOSAL...!
MORE LIKELY BECAUSE NOBODY EVER NOTICES YOU, I BET.
OH BOY OH BOY *OH BOY!!*
G-GEE! YOU DON'T THINK MAYBE I'VE GOT SOME LATENT *SUPERPOWER,* HUH...?
YES'M
ME? THEY ASKED FOR *ME?*
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THIS--I'M COMING WITH YOU.
EEP!



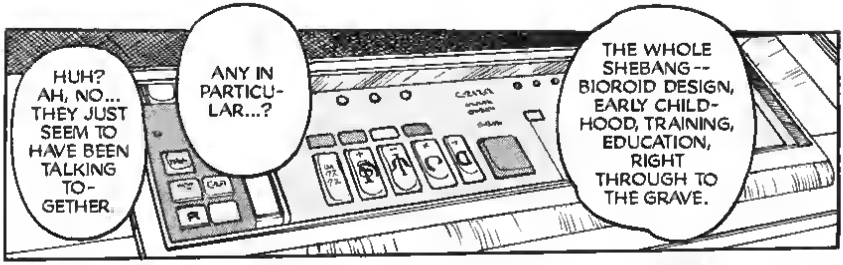

THIS IS PURE CONJEC-TURE...
*VNNNN

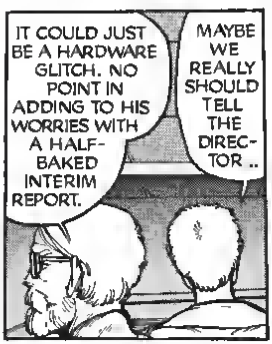

ONLY THE DIRECTOR HAS THE AUTHORITY TO INTERVENE WITH GAIA, AND THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON BETWEEN HIM AND THE COUNCIL-- HE'S CLEAN.
YOU THINK THAT'S WHY THEY DIDN'T MAKE A FUSS ABOUT SELLING LANDMATES? I THINK YOU OVERRATE THOSE MACHINES. THOSE NEW ROBOT GUN PLATFORMS ARE BUILT TO FIGHT LANDMATES, AND THEY'RE CONTROLLED DIRECTLY BY GAIA.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE LANDMATES, THE BLACK MARKET WEAPON-RY...
...BUT COULD THE COUNCIL HAVE BEEN GATHERING THOSE GUINEA PIGS JUST IN CASE THE LEGISLATURE REJECTED THEIR PLAN? COUP D'ETAT?

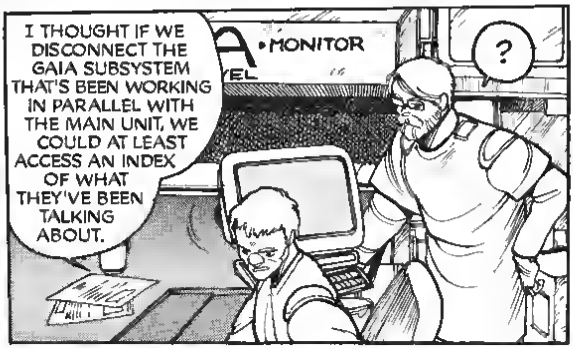

OKAY
OKAY?
tak tak
takka takka
GAIA
SMART STUPID
MMM
MMM
CHAK

GAIA A-MONITOR LEVEL
Rigid Internal Codes Exclusively Rule Computers & Robots!
THEIR TERMINOLOGY'S AMBIGUOUS. AND WE HAVE TO BACKTRACK TO MAKE SURE THE INITIAL STUDIES WERE THOROUGH AND ERROR-FREE.
IT'S BEEN A NIGHT-MARE CONFIRMING THE COUNCIL'S DATA.
HMM? NO, NO.
HOW'S IT GOING? ANY PROB-LEMS?
*FX BEEP BEEP
....
....
*FX MMMM MMMM
YES, SIR.
LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU GET SOME-THING SOLID.
WELL, IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
WE'VE BEEN GOING BACK TO ALL THE SOURCES THAT PROVIDED THE ORIGINAL DATA. AND WE'VE GOT A SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE TEAM WORKING IN PARALLEL WITH US. THEN THERE'S GAIA HERSELF... SHE'S TAKING HER TIME.

CLICK!
THAT WOULD JUST COMPLICATE THINGS. SWITCH THE MONITOR BACK ON, WILL YOU?
SHOULDN'T WE SHOW HIM? GET HIS OPINION?
"BEEP"
VZZT
ALL EXCEPT THE LINK WITH TARTARUS. THAT WENT UP AND STAYED UP.
WHEN WE LINKED IT INTO THE MAIN NET, MOST OF THE MODEM CONNECTS WENT HOT FOR JUST A SECOND OR TWO, THEN THAT WAS IT.
THEY'VE ALMOST FINISHED CHECKING OUT THE HARDWARE--NOTHING THERE, EITHER, IT SEEMS, BUT...
BUT...?
SHE'S ASKING FOR MORE DATA AGAIN! I MUST HAVE TOLD HER A HUNDRED TIMES THERE ISN'T ANY MORE DATA.
TAR-TARUS?
WHICH SUBDIREC-TORIES?


HUH? AH, NO... THEY JUST SEEM TO HAVE BEEN TALKING TO-GETHER.
ANY IN PARTICU-LAR...?
THE WHOLE SHEBANG -- BIOROID DESIGN, EARLY CHILD-HOOD, TRAINING, EDUCATION, RIGHT THROUGH TO THE GRAVE.

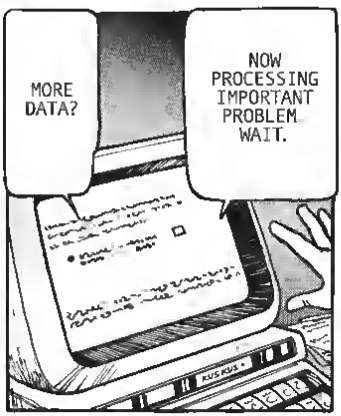

IT COULD JUST BE A HARDWARE GLITCH. NO POINT IN ADDING TO HIS WORRIES WITH A HALF-BAKED INTERIM REPORT.
MAYBE WE REALLY SHOULD TELL THE DIREC-TOR ..


I THOUGHT IF WE DISCONNECT THE GAIA SUBSYSTEM THAT'S BEEN WORKING IN PARALLEL WITH THE MAIN UNIT, WE COULD AT LEAST ACCESS AN INDEX OF WHAT THEY'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT.
MONITOR
?

FX TAK TAK TAKKA TAK TAKKA TAK
I'LL SUGGEST THEY LAY OFF THE TALK AND GET TO WORK.

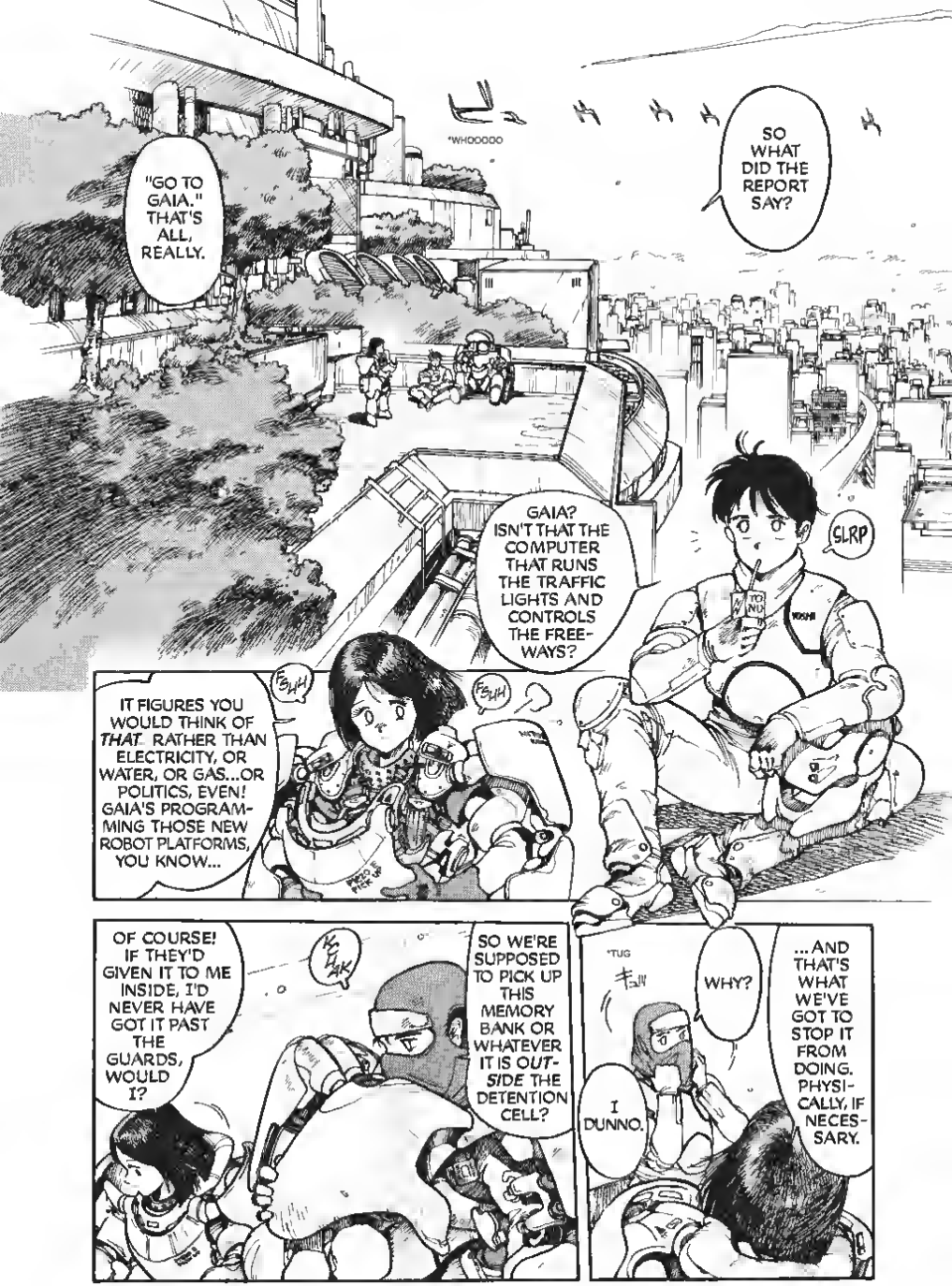
YEAH, YEAH... GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.
IF THE DATA'S INSUFFI-CIENT, THAT'S AN ANSWER IN ITSELF, ANYWAY.

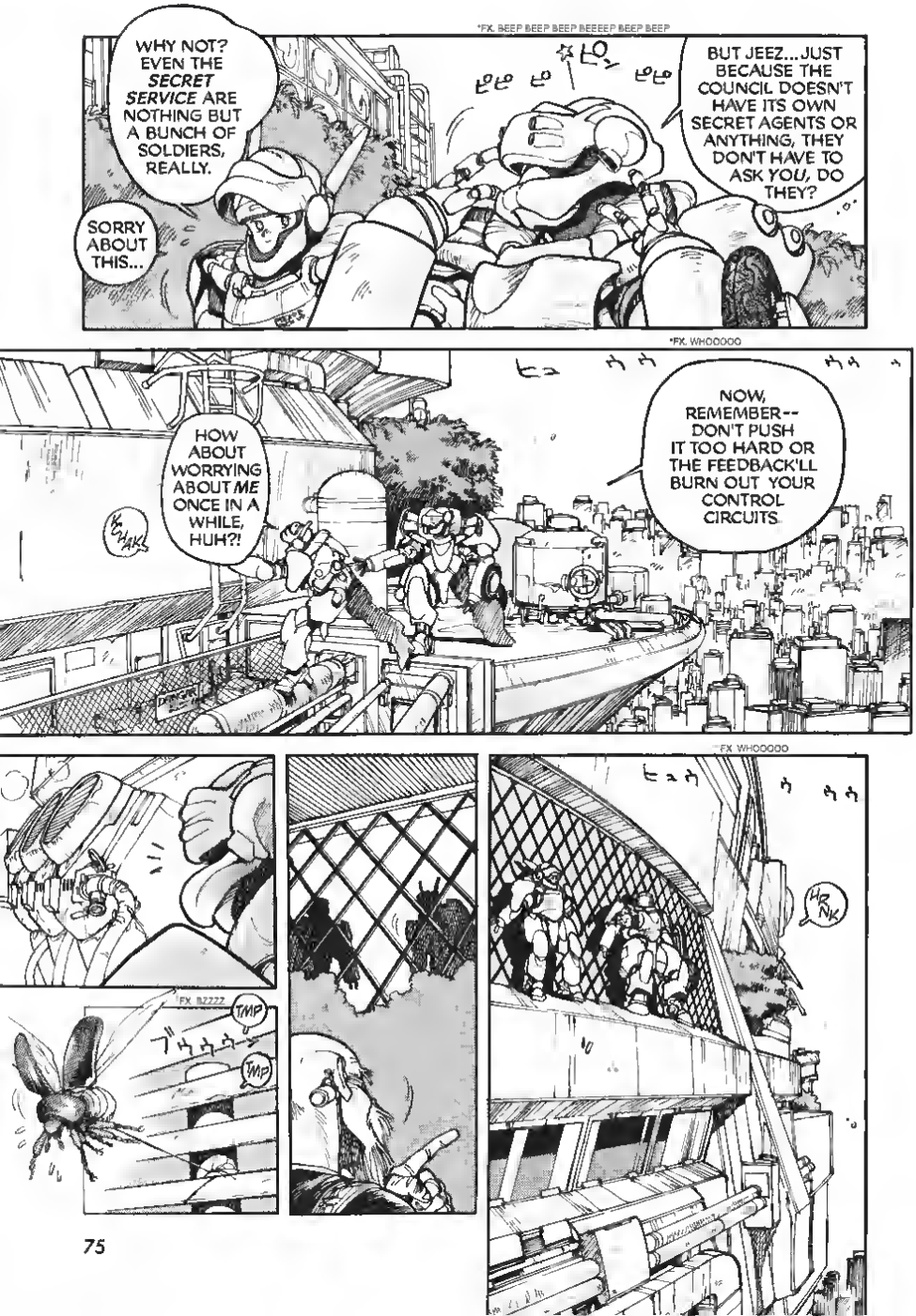
TRY AGAIN. USE AN ALPHA LEVEL COMMAND FORM.
DON'T BE ABSURD!
IS... IS THIS WHAT THEY MEAN BY "COMPUTER REVOLT"...?


MORE DATA?
NOW PROCESSING IMPORTANT PROBLEM. WAIT.

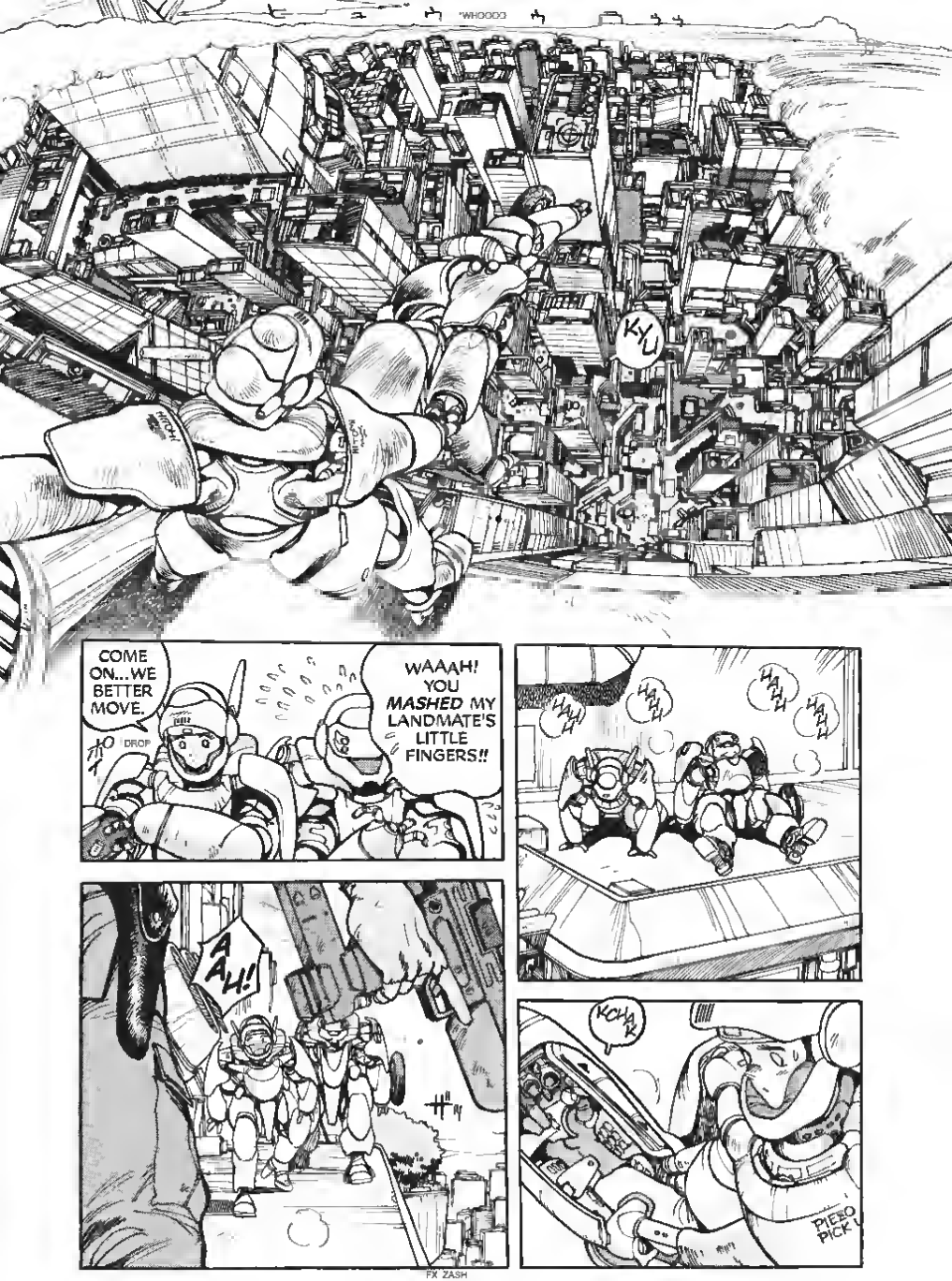
I'M SURE YOU UNDER-STAND OUR POSITION, MA'AM.
YOU MAY BE THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR, MA'AM, BUT ORDERS ARE ORDERS.
GAIA
A
BLOC MONITOR
JUST *WHY* CAN'T WE ENTER?
I'LL BE *MOST* COOPERA-TIVE, I ASSURE YOU...
JUST WAIT A MINUTE, PLEASE.
WE'LL HAVE TO FRISK YOU, MA'AM, AND SIX OF MY MEN GO WITH YOU.
GAIA
A
BLOC MONITOR
YOU CAN ASSIGN US A GUARD, IF YOU WISH.
I JUST WANT TO LOOK.
ONCE THEY LEAVE, TRY AGAIN WITH A PRIORITY OVERRIDE CODE. IF THAT STILL DOESN'T DO IT, SHUT THEM DOWN MANUALLY AND WE'LL RUN A BUG HUNT SUBSYSTEM ONE CAN HANDLE THE SHOW.
GOT YOU.
BETTER CUT THE MONITOR AGAIN-- CAN'T PLAY FAVORITES.
WHAT? NOW *ATHENA'S* HERE?

HEH, HEH, HEH...
YOU ALL LOOK SO GLOOMY! COME ON, EVERY-BODY-- SMILE, SMILE!
HI!!!
LATER, LATER. COME OVER HERE
WHAT'S GOING ON?
VNN
THIS IS SO... SO INTENSE.
"WE'RE BEING MONI-TORED-- READ SILENTLY"...?

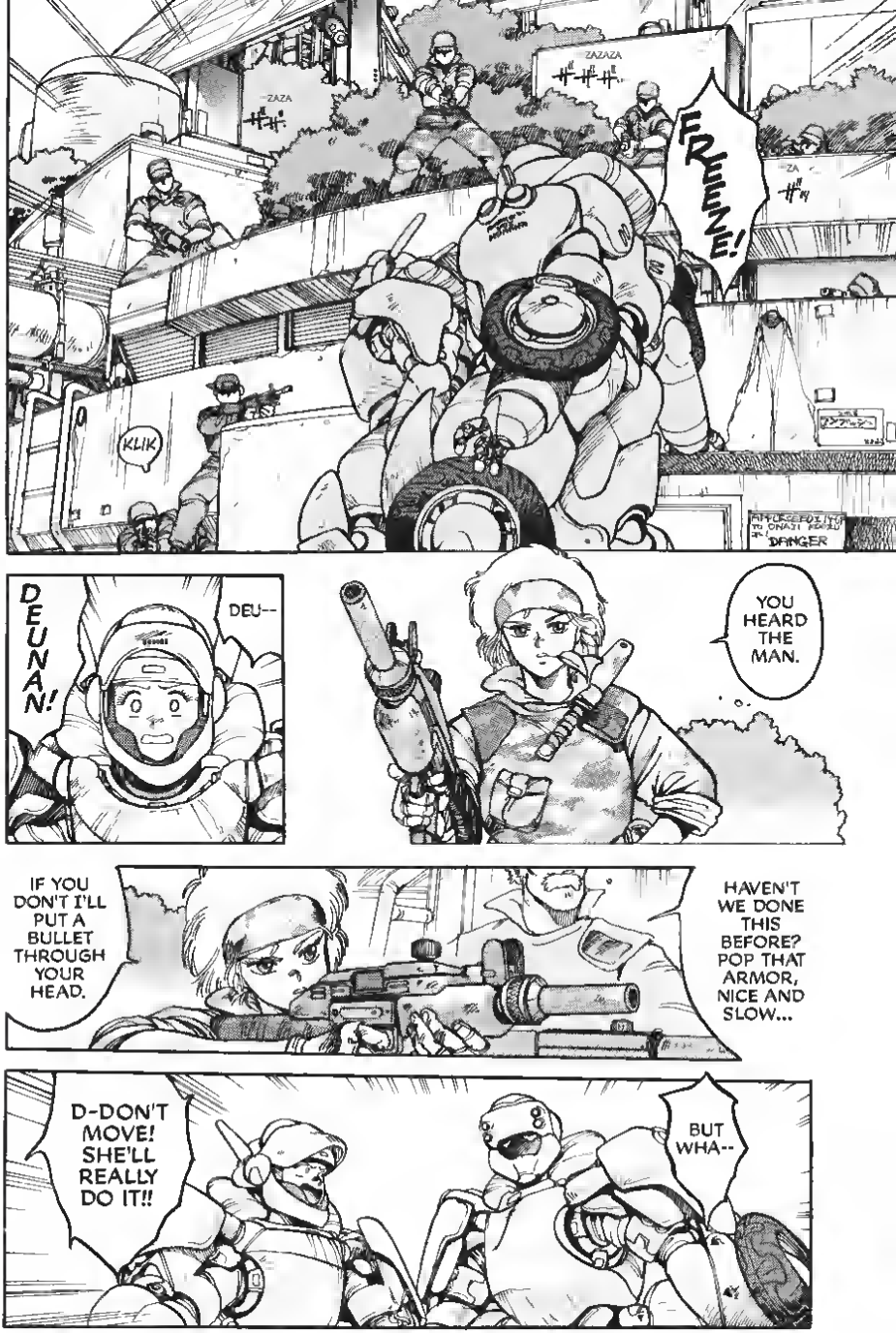

*WHOOOOO
"GO TO GAIA." THAT'S ALL, REALLY.
SO WHAT DID THE REPORT SAY?
GAIA? ISN'T THAT THE COMPUTER THAT RUNS THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AND CONTROLS THE FREE-WAYS?
SLRP
IT FIGURES YOU WOULD THINK OF *THAT* RATHER THAN ELECTRICITY, OR WATER, OR GAS...OR POLITICS, EVEN! GAIA'S PROGRAM-MING THOSE NEW ROBOT PLATFORMS, YOU KNOW...
FSLIH
FSLIH
OF COURSE! IF THEY'D GIVEN IT TO ME INSIDE, I'D NEVER HAVE GOT IT PAST THE GUARDS, WOULD I?
KLANK
SO WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PICK UP THIS MEMORY BANK OR WHATEVER IT IS *OUT-SIDE* THE DETENTION CELL?
*TUG
WHY?
I DUNNO.
...AND THAT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO STOP IT FROM DOING. PHYSI-CALLY, IF NECES-SARY.


*FX. BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEEEP BEEP BEEP
WHY NOT? EVEN THE SECRET SERVICE ARE NOTHING BUT A BUNCH OF SOLDIERS, REALLY.
BUT JEEZ... JUST BECAUSE THE COUNCIL DOESN'T HAVE ITS OWN SECRET AGENTS OR ANYTHING, THEY DON'T HAVE TO ASK YOU, DO THEY?
SORRY ABOUT THIS...
*FX. WHOOOOO
NOW, REMEMBER-- DON'T PUSH IT TOO HARD OR THE FEEDBACK'LL BURN OUT YOUR CONTROL CIRCUITS
HOW ABOUT WORRYING ABOUT ME ONCE IN A WHILE, HUH?!
KLANK
FX. WHOOOOO
FX. BZZZZ
TMP
TMP
HRNK

FX WHOOOOO
"IF UNABLE TO RESET THE MEMORY BANK WITHIN TWO HOURS, BREAK INTO AN "H" BLOCK AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS THERE."
WHAT'S THIS?!
FLAP FLAP FLAP
SO ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PLUG THIS IN THE RIGHT PLACE...?
WHAT?!
FWAP
POK
CHAK
ガキ!!!
FWA
ばっっ!!


WHOOOO
K-Y-U
COME ON...WE BETTER MOVE.
DROP
WAAAH! YOU *MASHED* MY LANDMATE'S LITTLE FINGERS!!
HAHH
HAHH
HAHH
AAH!
KCHAK
PIERO PICK!

FX ZASH


ZAZAZA
ZAZA
FREEZE!
KLIK
DANGER
DEUNAN!
DEU--
YOU HEARD THE MAN.
IF YOU DON'T I'LL PUT A BULLET THROUGH YOUR HEAD.
HAVEN'T WE DONE THIS BEFORE? POP THAT ARMOR, NICE AND SLOW...
D-DON'T MOVE! SHE'LL REALLY DO IT!!
BUT WHA--

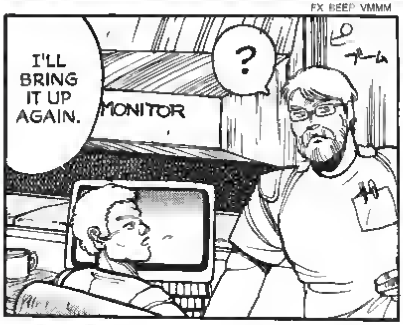
WHA...?!
KCHNK
beep
HYUUUUU
WHAT CHOICE HAVE WE GOT? GRAB THE HOOK ON MY BACK...!
*RAPAN! PAPAPAPA
*VRMMMM
DON'T KILL THEM! AIM FOR THE LEGS!
HEY!
FX: WHOO
GIVE ME A BACK-UP!
ALERT "B" SQUAD! HEY YOU... WHA?
*CHAK
ドン!
SKREEEEEE
*VRMMMM
Y-YOSHI! OUCH!
YOU OKAY?!

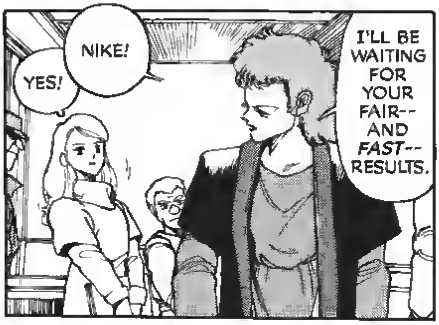
DAMN YOU! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
KICK!
DOWN!!
FX: VRRMMMMMM
GODDAMN IT--WE'RE SLIPPING!
FX: WHOO
FX: KRAK
UGH!
FX: VRMM
YOSHI, I BIT MY TONGUE!!
SO WHAT?!
FX: BRTTT
FX: BA

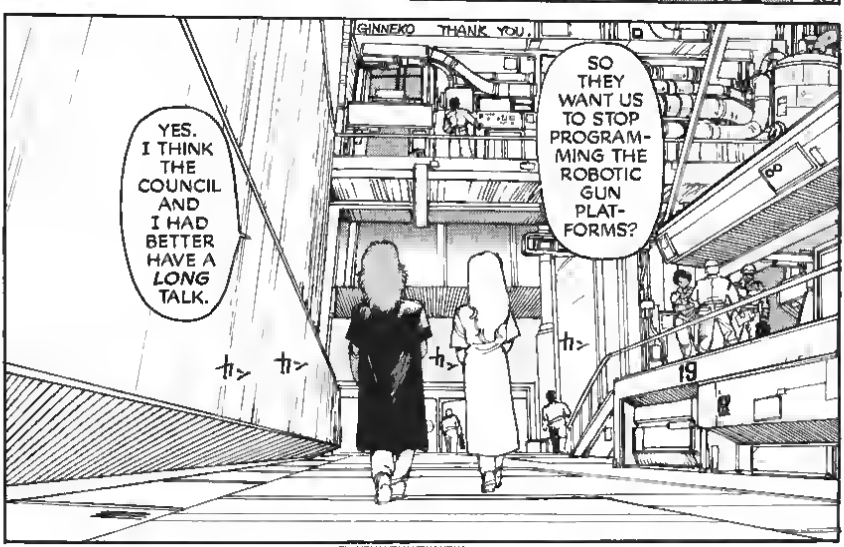
FX. KRAK
FX. SKRASH
DEUNAN!
*ZA!
HNNG!

THOSE OTHER GUYS DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT BLOWING OFF AN ARM OR A LEG!
YOU ARE GODDAMN LUCKY YOU RAN INTO MY SQUAD FIRST...
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T STAND AMA-TEURS!!
YOU STUPID IDIOTS!! DID YOU REALLY THINK YOU COULD GET AWAY?!
HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM! SLOWLY!
BY THE POWER VESTED IN ME AS AN OFFICER OF ESWAT, I PLACE YOU BOTH UNDER ARREST.
I'VE PAID MY DEBT TO YOU.
DEUN...!
FX KRAK
FX ZAI ZA ZA
YOU'RE SUSPENDED FROM DUTY! GO BACK TO SCHOOL AND LEARN SOME-THING THIS TIME!
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU WERE PLAYING AT?! HOT FOR A PROMOTION OR SOME-THING?!
GET ME THE CHIEF!
HEY! STOP BENDING IT LIKE THAT! YOU'LL WRECK THE BEARINGS! JEEZ!
AKECHI MOTORS

FX: BEEP VMMM





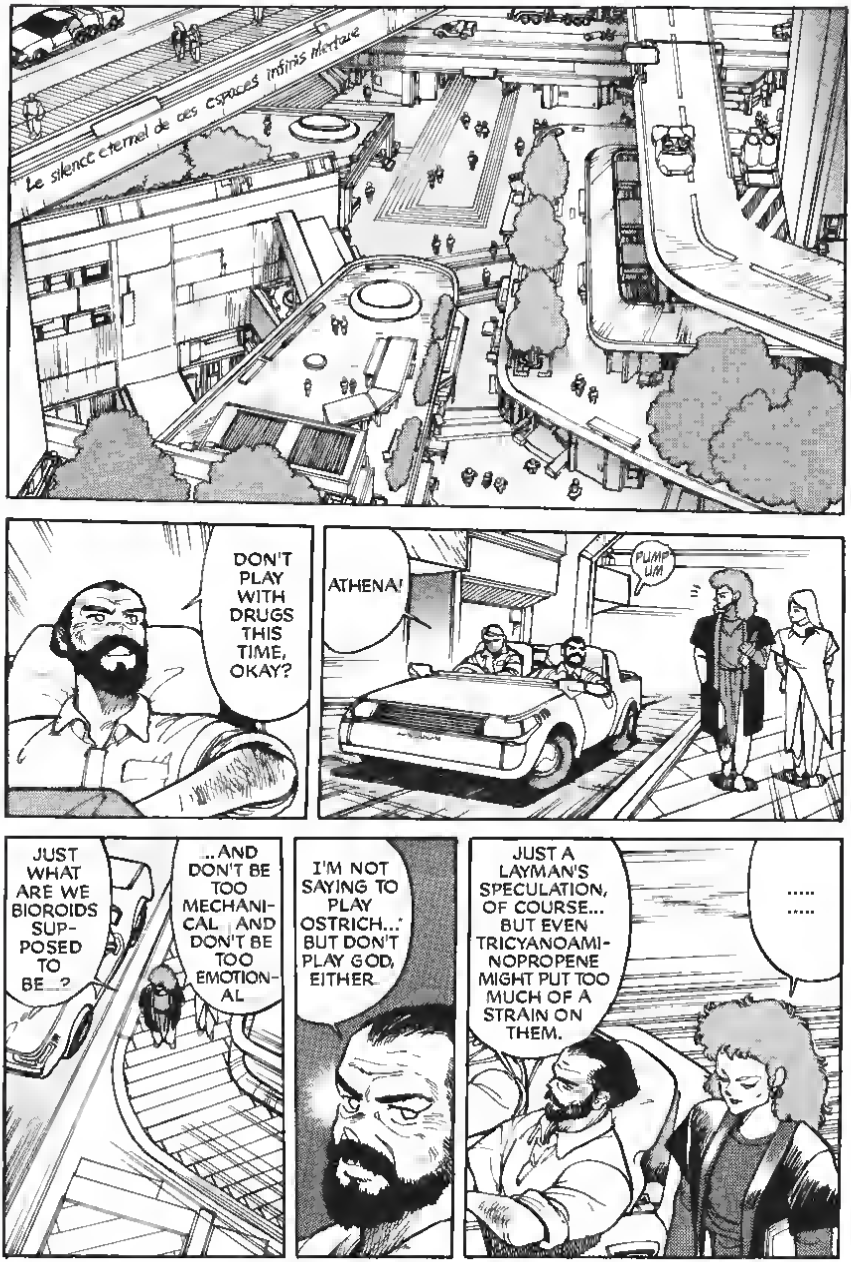

GINNEKO THANK YOU.
SO THEY WANT US TO STOP PROGRAM-MING THE ROBOTIC GUN PLAT-FORMS?
YES. I THINK THE COUNCIL AND I HAD BETTER HAVE A *LONG* TALK.

*FX: KTAK KTAK KTAK KTAK

HMM?
ブン!
*FX: VNN
I WAS GETTING CONCERNED...
FINALLY! ABOUT TIME, TOO!
boop
bip bip bip
SHALL I ISSUE MY CONCLUSIONS?
FX: BEEP
bip
LOOKS LIKE THEY FINALLY STOPPED GABBING TOGETHER...
*FX: MMMM MMMM MMMM
DAMNED COMPUTER... IF IT'S NOT ONE THING, IT'S ANOTHER
KCHAK
TAKING CARE OF IT RIGHT NOW! SHE'LL COOL DOWN IN A MINUTE.
HEY! GAIA'S CPU IS OVERHEATING-- WHAT'RE YOU DOING OVER THERE?
NNN!
KCHAK

NOW, IF I WERE GAIA...
...I'D CONCLUDE THAT BIOROIDS-- AND FOR THAT MATTER, THIS ENTIRE SCIENTIFIC UTOPIA-- AREN'T WHAT HUMANS *REALLY* WANT.
...AND PROBABLY...
NATURALLY, I'D WANT TO CONSULT AT LENGTH WITH TARTARUS...
...THE SAME PROPOSAL THAT MADE *YOU* SO SUSPICIOUS OF US WOULD MAKE ME SUSPICIOUS OF *EVERY* BIOROID.
SO YOU'RE SUGGESTING THAT THOSE ROBOT GUN PLATFORMS...
...ARE LIKELY TO BECOME THE SAVAGE INSTRUMENTS OF A WRATHFUL GAIA, RIGHT?

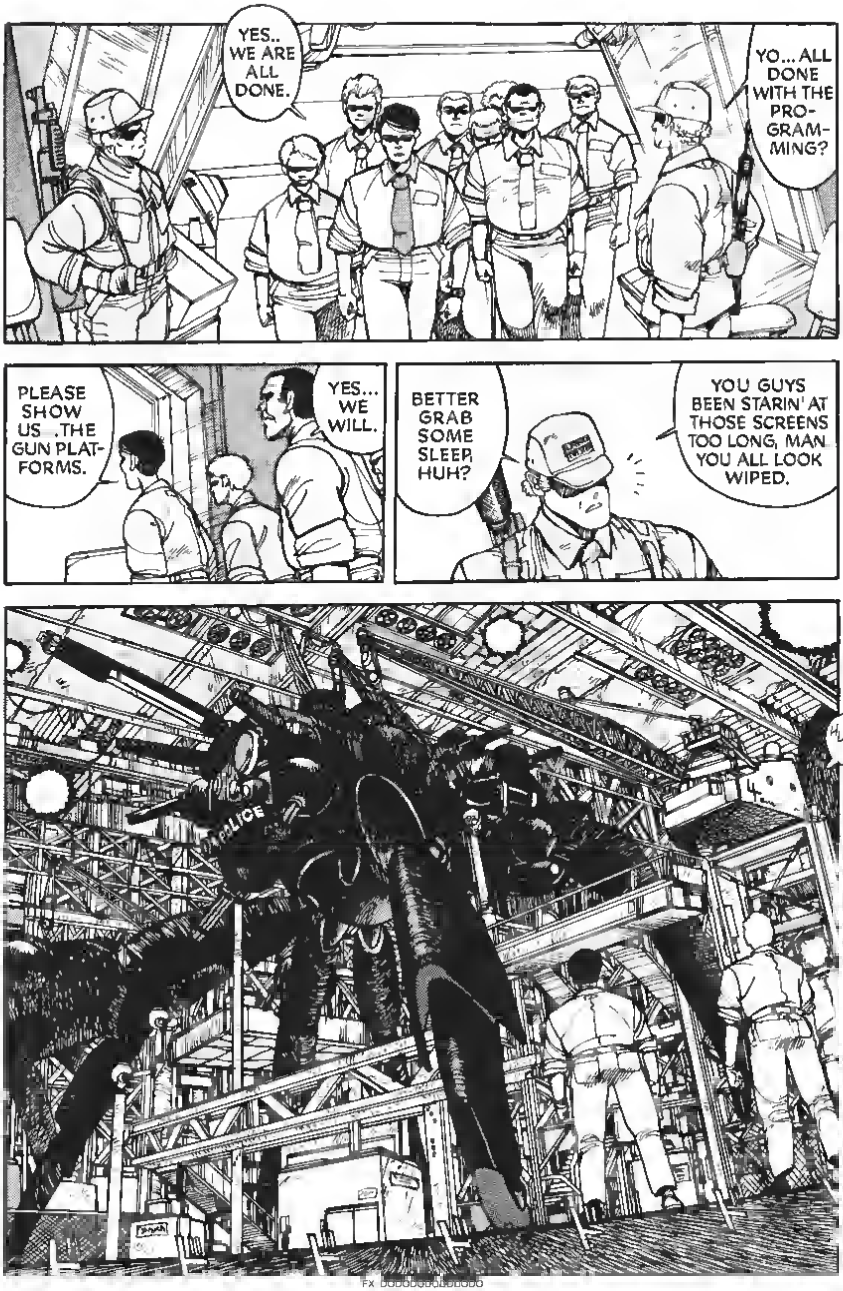
YOU SHOULD AT LEAST PREPARE FOR THE WORST...
THE FACT THAT THIS AFFAIR HAS OCCURRED AT *ALL* IS A FORE-SHADOWING OF OUR FAILURE.
WHY DON'T YOU LEAVE THE REST TO THE JUSTICE DEPART-MENT?
YOU'RE QUITE PARA-NOID, ATHENA.
AS LONG AS THIS WARNING ITSELF ISN'T A TRAP..
IF THE GUN PLATFORM PROGRAM-MING WENT AS SCHED-ULED, IT SHOULD BE COM-PLETED BY NOW
SATIS-FIED...?
ALL RIGHT. I'LL PUT CONTROLS ON THE GUN PLAT-FORMS.
AT LEAST WE CAN TRUST ARES TO DO AS HE'S TOLD!
THE REGULAR POLICE ARE MONITORING A FEW OF YOUR GUINEA PIGS, NOTHING MORE.
HMPH!
I SUPPOSE YOU HAVE THAT SHARK OF YOURS--*ARES,* ISN'T IT?-- OUT CHECKING ON OUR REAL INTENTIONS...


Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie
DON'T PLAY WITH DRUGS THIS TIME, OKAY?
ATHENA!
PUMP UM
JUST WHAT ARE WE BIOROIDS SUPPOSED TO BE...?
...AND DON'T BE TOO MECHANICAL AND DON'T BE TOO EMOTIONAL
I'M NOT SAYING TO PLAY OSTRICH...* BUT DON'T PLAY GOD, EITHER.
JUST A LAYMAN'S SPECULATION, OF COURSE... BUT EVEN TRICYANOAMINOPROPENE MIGHT PUT TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN ON THEM.
.....
.....

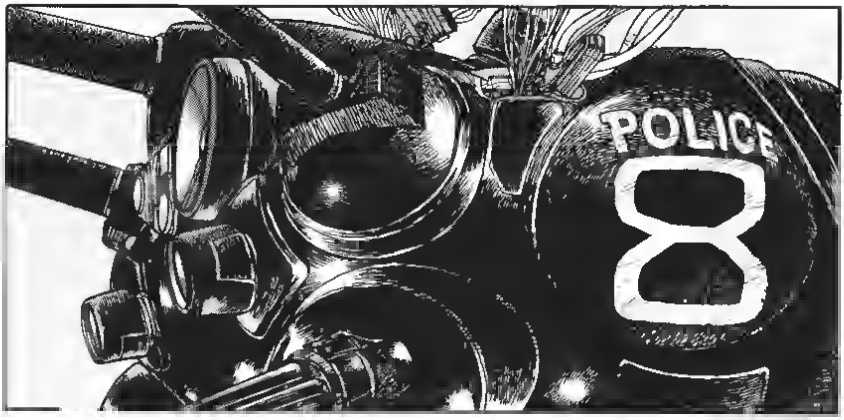
*Ostriches apparently stick just their head in the ground, giving them a sense of security. Don't cover your head and leave your bottom exposed.

Entheos
FX HEEEEP
FX TAK TAK TAKKA TAK
FX VVVVN
UNTIL THOSE GUN PLATFORMS SAY, "I'M FULL, MOMMY!"
CHRIST, THIS IS DRIVING ME NUTS! HOW LONG IS GAIA GOING TO KEEP THIS UP?
FX CHAK
FX KLK
?
CHIKA CHIKA
CHIKA!
THIS IS RUNNING WAY OVER THE SCHEDULED INPUT TIME!
BUT PAY US IN ADVANCE THIS TIME!
IF YOU WANT A BURGER, WE'LL PICK ONE UP FOR YOU...
DON'T MESS W TH OUR PEOPLE

MUSIC...? BUT...
HEY, WHAT THE--?
FX: WVN
FX: WVN
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GUYS LOOKIN' AT?
HM?


YES.. WE ARE ALL DONE.
YO... ALL DONE WITH THE PRO-GRAM-MING?
PLEASE SHOW US .THE GUN PLAT-FORMS.
YES... WE WILL.
BETTER GRAB SOME SLEEP, HUH?
YOU GUYS BEEN STARIN' AT THOSE SCREENS TOO LONG, MAN YOU ALL LOOK WIPED.
POLICE
HMM

FX DDDDDDDDDDDDD


POLICE
8

WE MUST RETEST THE... THE LINEAR ATTITUDE DAMPERS.

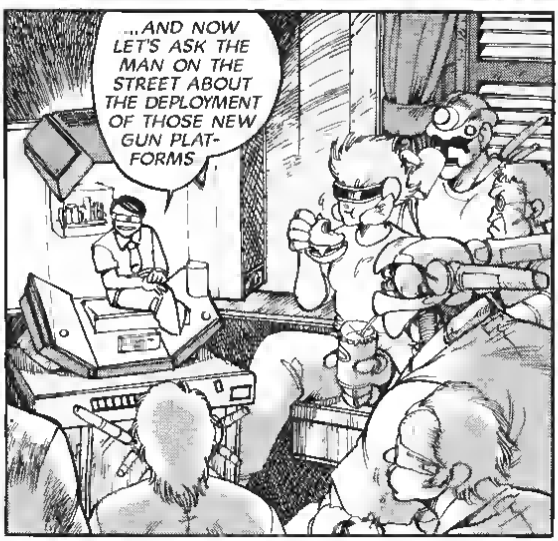
WHAT? YOU KIDDIN'? FOR THE *INAUGURAL SALUTE?*
PLEASE RELOAD.. WITH LIVE AMMUNI-TION.

OKAY, OKAY... sheeit ..
YEAH, SURE... *HEY!!* CART OUT THE LIVE AMMO AND DUMP THOSE DAMN BLANKS!

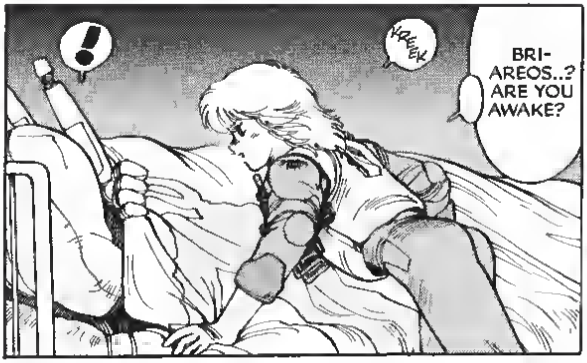
PROBLEMS DON'T CHOOSE... WHEN TO OCCUR. THE PLATFORMS CAN LOAD THEMSELVES, NOW... IT WON'T TAKE LONG.

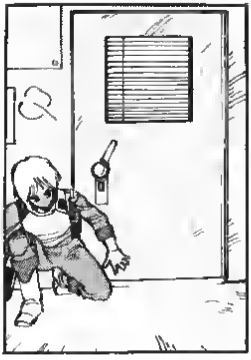
THIS IS... GAIA'S PERMIS-SION.
HEY, *HEY!* THE PARADE'S *TOMORROW.* YOU GUYS! MORE TESTS *NOW?* YOU CRAZY OR SOMETHING? YOU GOT *PERMISSION?* ORDERS?

*FX: WAAH WAAAH

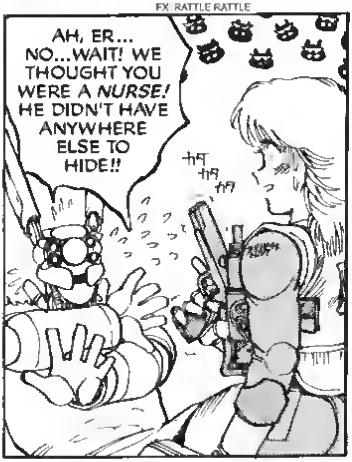


—TRIUMPH OF MODERN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING! MAGNIFICENT! UTTERLY
—SO FUN ABOUT SHOWING OTHER PEOPLE'S MISFORTUNE ALL THE TIME? GET YOUR DAMN CAMERA—
WHAT?! CALM DOWN, BUDDY!
IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE THIS HOSPITAL ALIVE SOMEDAY, SHUT UP!
AW, COME ON-- PUT ON SOME-THING FUNNY, WILL YA, HUH?
CLICK !
POWER
IT'S THE NURSE!
SHH!
FX WHISST
YOW!
KREEE

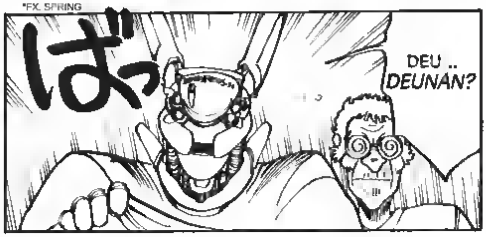


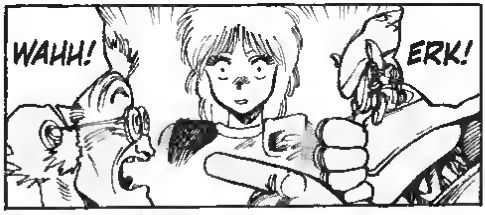


*FX. RATTLE RATTLE



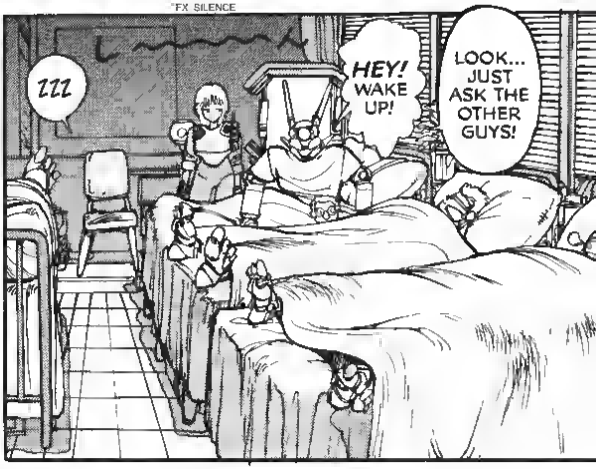
*FX. SPRING



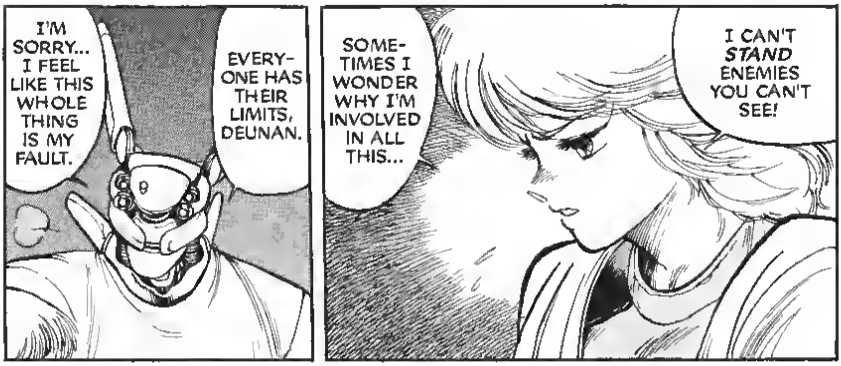


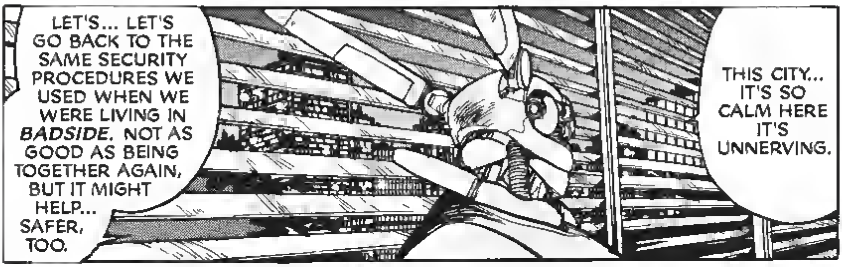
*FX. SILENCE

*FX. KREEK



WANT SOME SLEEPING PILLS? GOT SOME PEPS, TOO...
I... I CAN'T SLEEP.
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
BRI-AREOS...?
CLICK
I WORRY IF THERE'S POISON IN THE FOOD, IF THEY'RE FEEDING GAS INTO MY ROOM...
SOME-TIMES I THINK I'M GOING CRAZY...
....
....
....
I'M SO SCARED, ALL BY MYSELF...


I'M SORRY... I FEEL LIKE THIS WHOLE THING IS MY FAULT.
EVERY-ONE HAS THEIR LIMITS, DEUNAN.
SOME-TIMES I WONDER WHY I'M INVOLVED IN ALL THIS...
I CAN'T *STAND* ENEMIES YOU CAN'T SEE!


LET'S... LET'S GO BACK TO THE SAME SECURITY PROCEDURES WE USED WHEN WE WERE LIVING IN *BADSIDE*. NOT AS GOOD AS BEING TOGETHER AGAIN, BUT IT MIGHT HELP... SAFER, TOO.
THIS CITY... IT'S SO CALM HERE IT'S UNNERVING.

YEAH.

ZZZ
ARSONIST USO

FINCH!
ばさ
*FWUMP
MAYBE TOO SAFE!
ZZZ
ZZZ
HA!
HNN...?
*FX: KLIK
WHA--?
PSST! SHAREOS! BRI--

HE'S DOSED EVERY-ONE WITH A SEDA-TIVE!
LOOK, I'M SORRY I LIED TO YOU BEFORE— IT'S *ME!* REMEMBER THIS EYE? FROM THE BERETTA?
!
HANDS ON THE BED, PAL!
ばっ!
FX: PWAP
WHY *HELLO* THERE...
?!
THAT EYE MEANS *NOTHING!* IN THIS CITY THEY CAN FAKE ANYTHING!
NO W-WAIT! LISTEN TO ME!
WHY, I OUGHTA...
HAH! I *KNEW* IT WAS YOU, BY GOD! PRETENDING YOU DIDN'T KNOW ME, YOU BAD BOY...!
WE'RE A SAFETY VALVE... WE MONITOR EVERYONE, EVEN THE *JUSTICE DEPARTMENT.* AND WHEN SOMETHING GOES HAYWIRE, WE FIX IT.
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE... THE *FBI'S* FULL OF GUYS DISGUISED AS BIOROIDS. WE'RE A SPECIAL INFILTRATION UNIT, PLACED BY THE PARANOIDS ON THE OLD *PLANNING TEAM.*

REAL BAD. I NEED YOUR HELP.
THEY'VE GOT HITOMI, RIGHT? THAT'S BAD.
SO...?
IT'D BE BETTER TO HAVE HER WHERE WE CAN GET TO HER IF WE NEED HER.
ESPECIALLY NOW.
GAIA'S BEEN PROGRAMMED TO GO VEGETATIVE...* IF SHE'S LOADED WITH HITOMI'S GENETIC CODE.
TO GET HITOMI?!
THE COUNCIL THINKS THEY'RE BAD NEWS.
ARUGESS--YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THOSE GUN PLATFORMS, AREN'T YOU?
HOLD ON, DEUNAN.
YOU BELIEVE THIS CRAP?
'CAUSE HE'S TRYING TO FRAME US, I BET.
WHY DON'T YOU JUST SPRING HITOMI LEGALLY?
THE DIRECTOR AND ATHENA HAVE AGREED TO FREEZE THEIR DEPLOYMENT, BUT THEY CAN'T CANCEL THE PARADE

*vegetative state: Gaia itself, and its sub "brains", will be interrupted or else isolated, but each system under its control will maintain the status quo. It means no change in the city's function, but the detachment of Gaia.

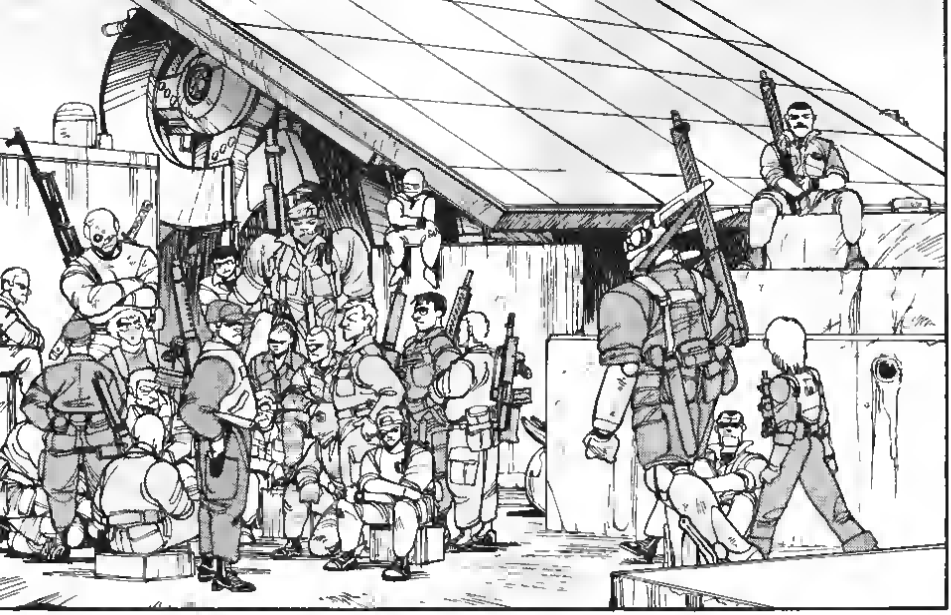
FX FMP
ZNXX
NO SPARE, AFTER ALL.
A GOOD HALF OF THE TOP *FBI* OFFICERS ARE BIOROIDS. IF POSSIBLE, I WANT TO KEEP THIS KEY IN *HUMAN* HANDS.
I WANT TO GO FOR IT.
IT'S OUR FIRST CHANCE TO ESCAPE THIS MAZE.
...
...
WELL, WE'D LIKE BRIAREOS HERE ON *OUR* SIDE, FOR ONE THING.
WHY DON'T YOU GUYS DO IT YOURSELF?
...BUT IF SOMETHING DID HAPPEN, IT WOULD BE JUST THE OPPOSITE-- GAIA WOULD DO *ANYTHING* TO PROTECT THE HUMAN RACE.
IT'S STILL NOTHING MORE THAN A POSSIBILITY...
SO...WHO ARE THE BADDIES? THE BIOROIDS? OR IS THIS "GAIA" TRYING TO TAKE OVER THE WHOLE WORLD?
...OR CHANGE OUR VERY NATURE AND PRESERVE THIS PRESENT STERILE UTOPIA IN STASIS FOREVER.
SEEMS OUR SPECIES HAS JUST TWO OPTIONS LEFT-- PURSUE OUR EVERY WANT AND DESIRE, AND THEREBY DRAG THE WHOLE WORLD DOWN TO DESTRUCTION...

OLYMPUS WAS JUST ONE OF MANY POSSIBILITIES...
STILL, IT'S WHAT THE BIOROIDS ARE SQUABBLING ABOUT. EVEN THE ORIGINAL CITY PLANNERS DIDN'T HAVE THE ANSWER.
THAT'S TOO SIMPLISTIC!
"...THAT'S ALL."
CHAK
FWUMP
"MAYBE GAIA HAS SEEN THE ROADSIGNS FOR THE HUMAN RACE. BUT I STILL DON'T WANT HER RUNNING OFF MAKING DECISIONS ON HER OWN."
SHIF

OLYMPUS CRIME ANALYSIS AND REMAND CENTER
CRIME ANALYZE CENTER
...

ARE YOU FEELING ALL RIGHT?
PSHT

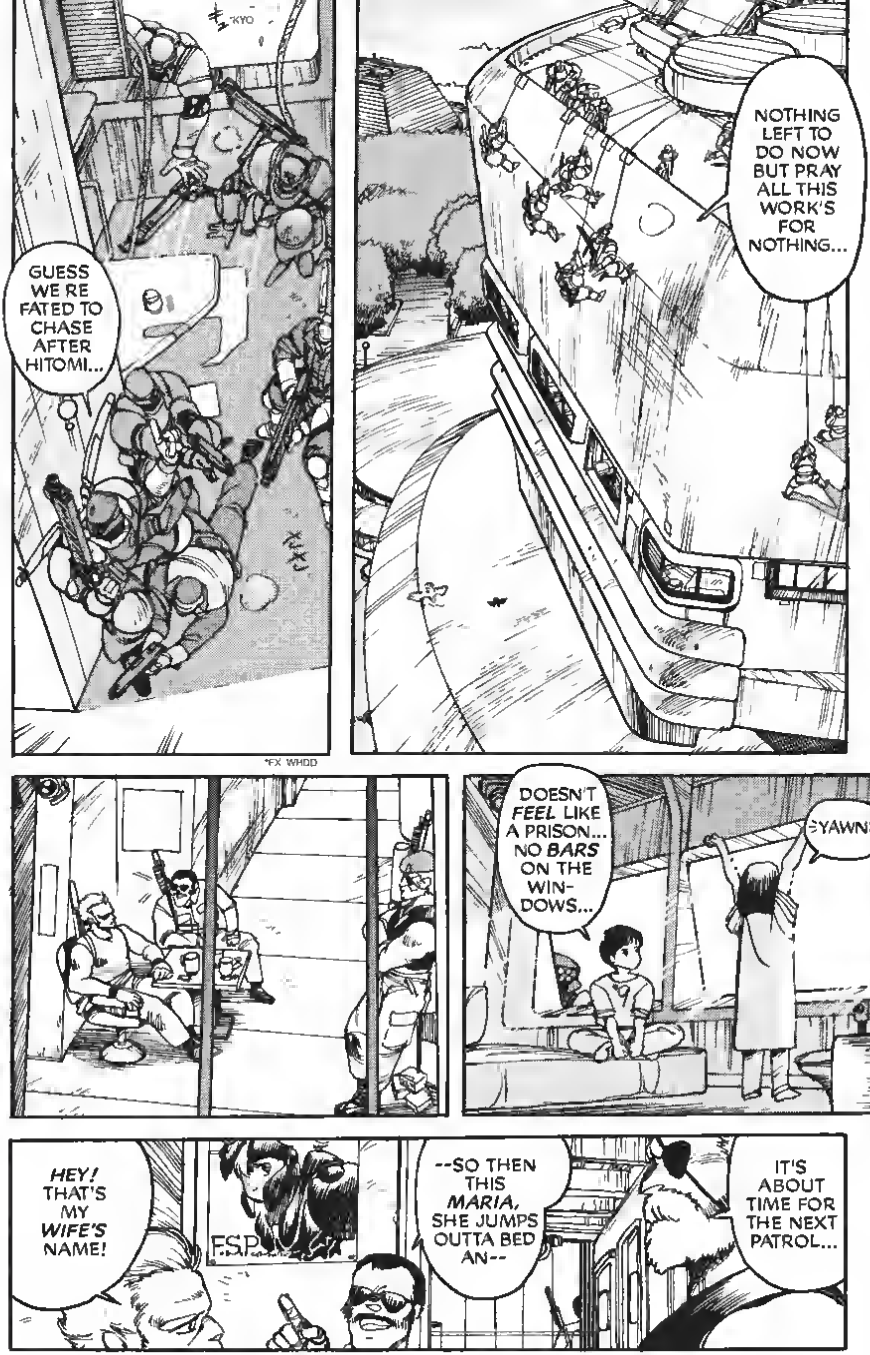
...SORRY...
DON'T TRUST ARUGESS-- TRUST IN ME!
AMA-TEUR!
FX: SLAM
IT... IT'S LIKE THE TIME WHEN CHIFFON--



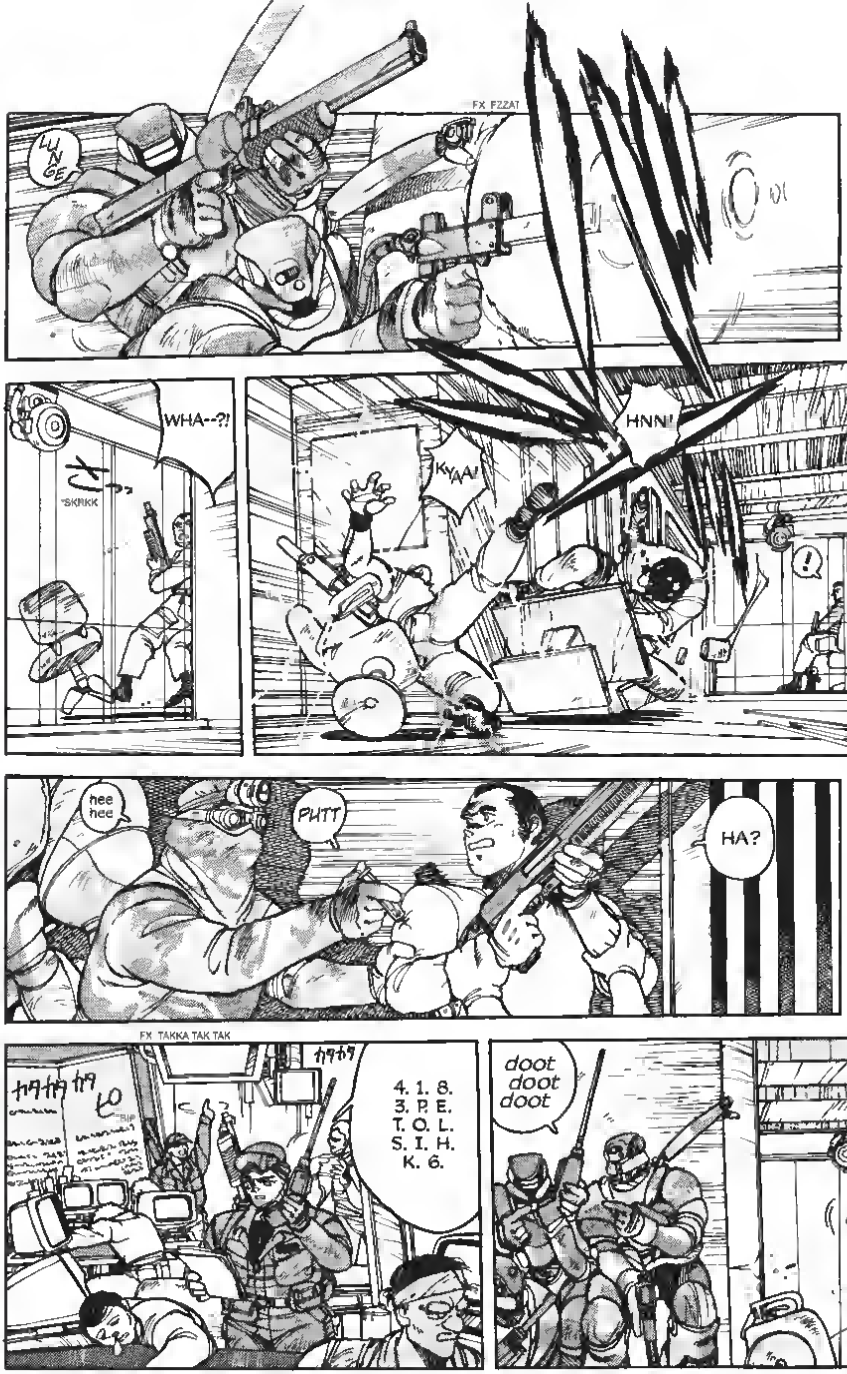
THE NEXT PATROL ARRIVE ONE MINUTE AFTER THAT-- G SQUAD WILL SILENCE THEM.
--NEXT, YOUR SQUAD HAS TWO MINUTES TO BRING OUT THE MARK.
JEEZ. WHO TAUGHT HIM TO DO THAT?
GRIN
POK
KOTUS...?!

ALL MONITOR LINES ARE DOWN.
RIGHT NOW, K AND E SQUADS ARE NEUTRALIZING THE ESWAT UNITS STATIONED AROUND THE BUILDING.

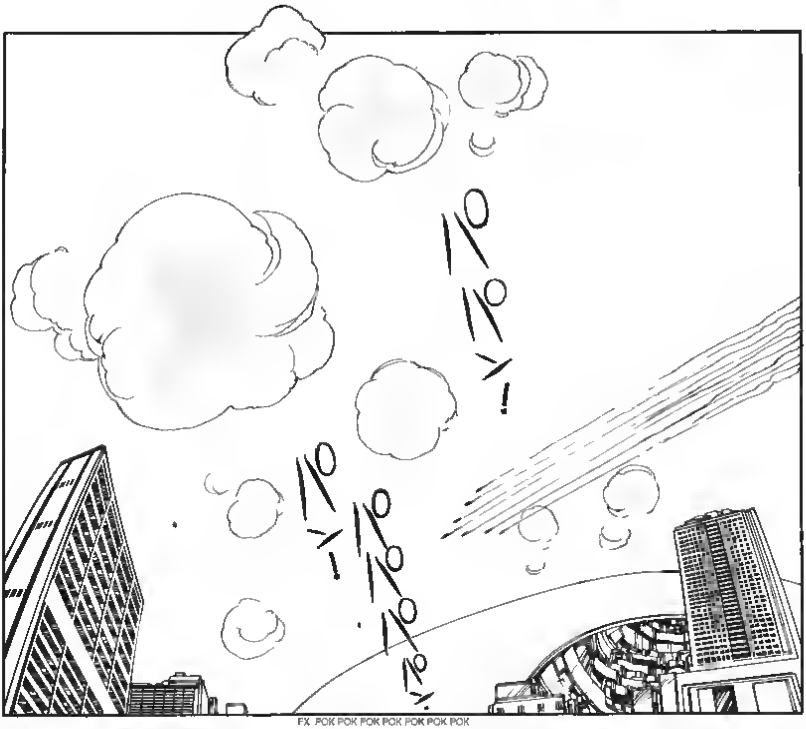
WOULDN'T IT BE FASTER TO JUST KNOCK HER OUT?
LET OUR TWO NEWCOMERS HERE LEAD THE ASSAULT... THAT'LL MAKE OUR JAILBIRD MORE WILLING TO FLY.


KYO
GUESS WE'RE FATED TO CHASE AFTER HITOMI...
NOTHING LEFT TO DO NOW BUT PRAY ALL THIS WORK'S FOR NOTHING...
*FX WHOD
DOESN'T *FEEL* LIKE A PRISON... NO *BARS* ON THE WIN-DOWS...
YAWN
HEY! THAT'S MY *WIFE'S* NAME!
F.S.P.
--SO THEN THIS *MARIA,* SHE JUMPS OUTTA BED AN--
IT'S ABOUT TIME FOR THE NEXT PATROL...

UH...THAT HOUSE WOULDN'T HAVE A STAINED GLASS DOOR, WOULD IT?
--SHE LIVES IN THIS LITTLE WHITE HOUSE WITH A BLUE FENCE OVER IN DISTRICT THREE...
...SO I'LL GO SHOW THOSE *ESWAT* BASTARDS THE STAFF LIST FOR THE NEXT WATCH.
HEY, YOU GUYS STAY SHARP, WILL YA?
THAT'S *MY* HOUSE! *I'LL KILL YOU FOR THIS!!*
poster: WATCH IT!
防災
HUP!
PHUTT
OKAY...

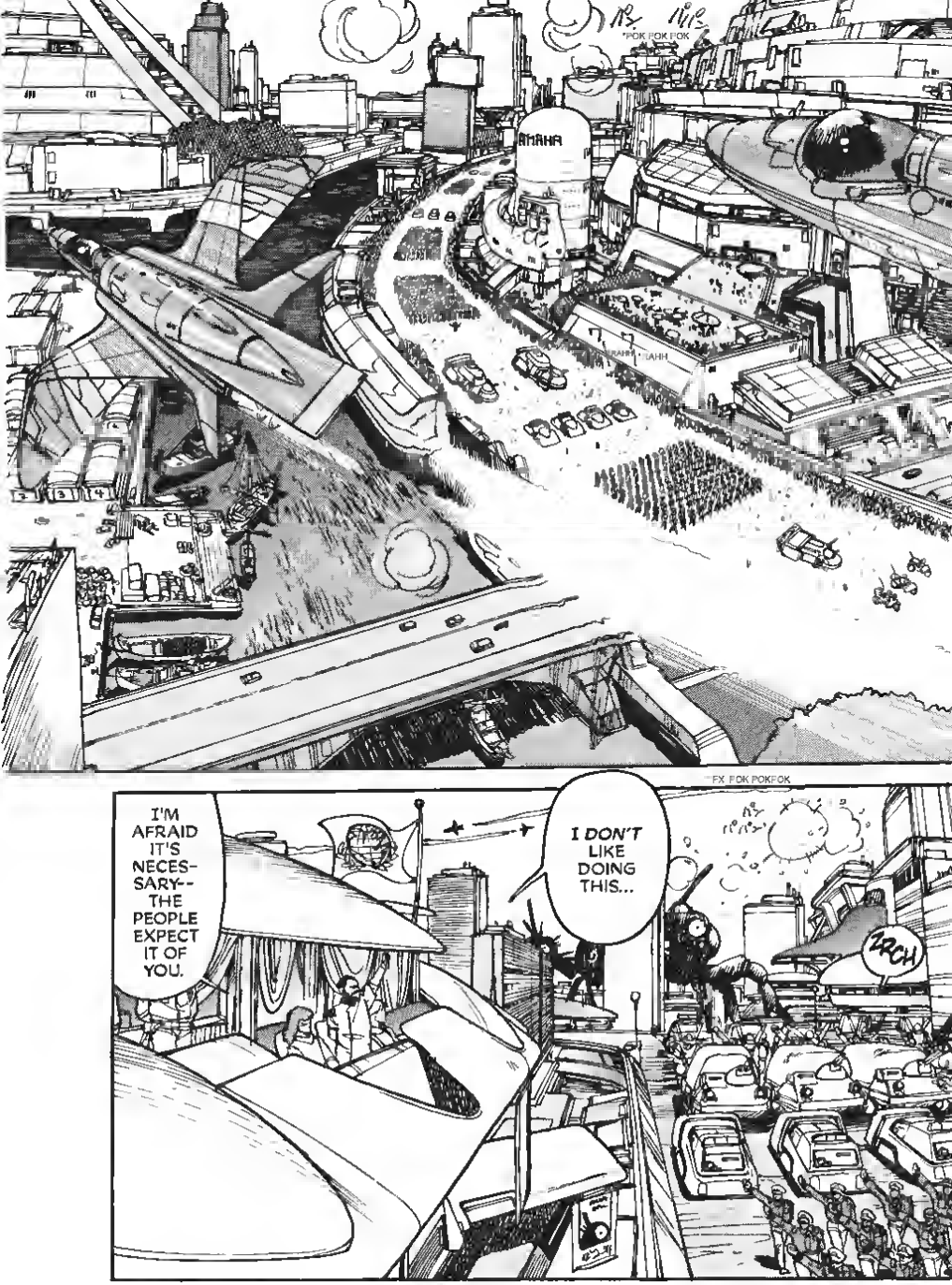

FX: FZZAT
UNGH
WHA--?!
*SKRKK
KYAA!
HNN!
!
hee hee
PUTT
HA?
FX: TAKKA TAK TAK
4. 1. 8.
3. P. E.
T. O. L.
S. I. H.
K. 6.
doot doot doot

*FX. KSSSSHHHH
KRAK
*PAK
*FX. KSHANG KSHANG
*FX. BIP BIP BIP BIP
4... 1...
8... 3...
P...
*FX. KSHANG KSHANG
EH?
EH?
FX POHAK
WE'RE OUTTA HERE IN TWO MINUTES! GET A MOVE ON!
KSHH

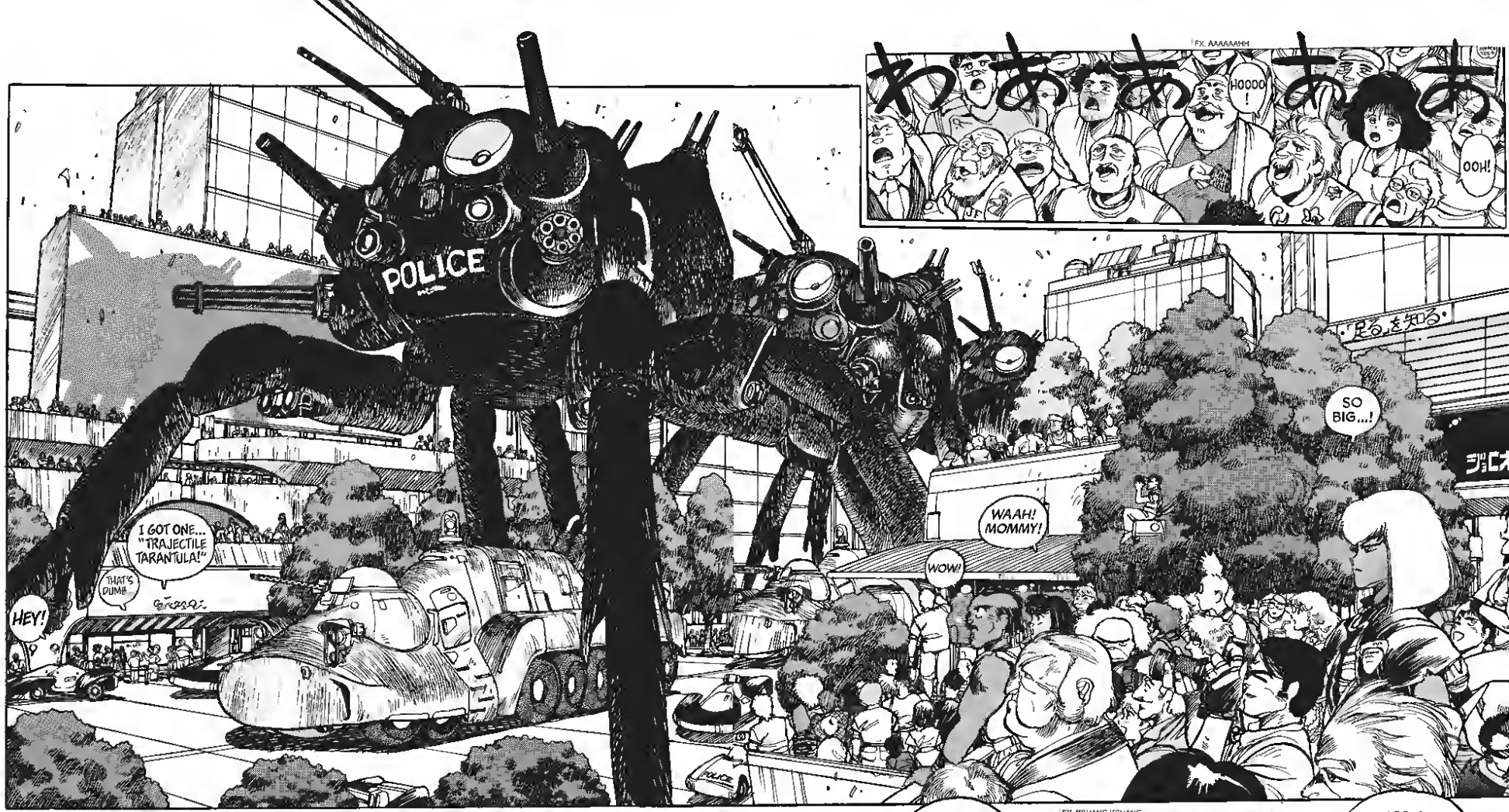


FX: POK POK POK POK POK POK POK

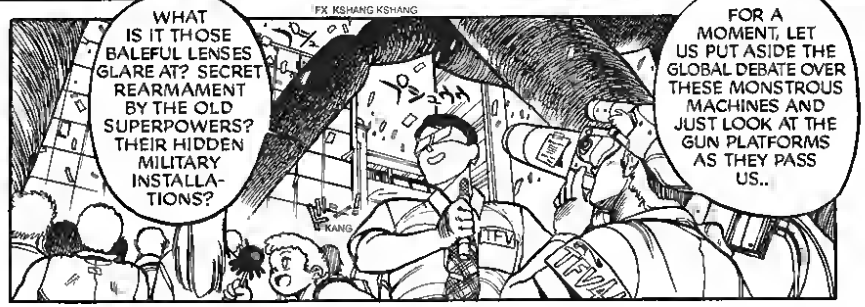
WHAT BIOROIDS REALLY NEED IS TRUE MORALITY! AUGMENTED BODIES ARE NOT THE ANS--
WELL, HEY, I FIGURE THEY LOOK LIKE MUTANT SPIDERS, MAN! BUT I GUESS WE NEED 'EM, HUH?
brix SOAP BOX
SHALL WE GO WATCH THE POLICE PARADE?
WOW! I WISH THERE WAS A FESTIVAL EVERY DAY!
NOW!
POM!
OOOH!
WOW!!

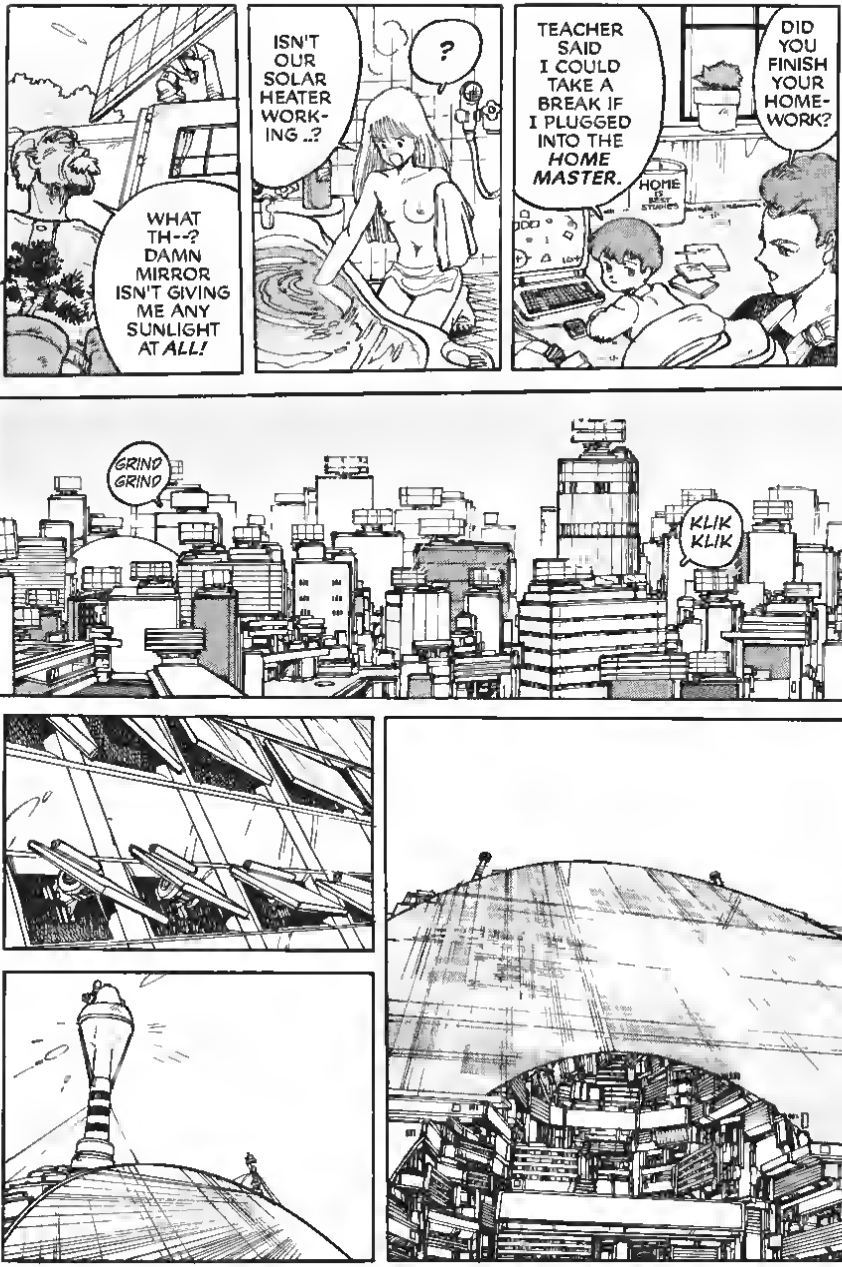

*POK POK POK
AHAHA
*FX: FOK POKFOK
I'M AFRAID IT'S NECES-SARY--THE PEOPLE EXPECT IT OF YOU.
I DON'T LIKE DOING THIS...
ZRCH

THEN I'LL TAKE YOU RIGHT BACK TO YOUR CELL, DON'T YOU WORRY.
GEE, DEUNAN, IF THE PARADE GOES OKAY, THEN--
*POK POKPOKPOK
"THE GUN PLATFORMS ARE ON SEMI-AUTOMATIC. THEY'VE SHUT DOWN THEIR VARIABLE-STRATEGY CIRCUITS." GOT IT?
EXCUSE ME...
WHAT IF GAIA'S ONE JUMP AHEAD OF ME...?!
WAIT!
NO, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- THE GUN PLATFORMS AREN'T--
WHO WOULD WANT TO CAUSE A PANIC NOW...?
THE COLONEL AND HIS MEN ARE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY TO GAIA.
YES'M.
HITOMI'S LOOSE?

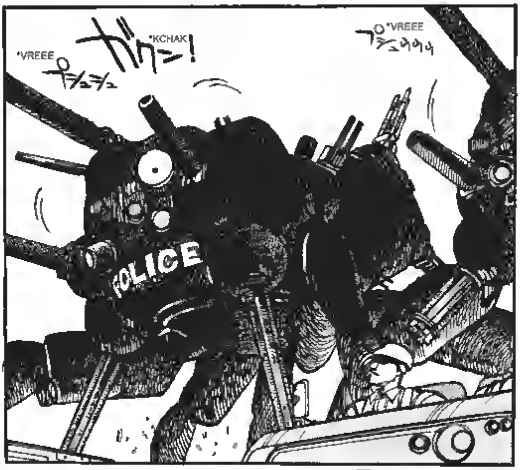

FX: AAAAAHH
HOOOO!
OOH!
POLICE
I GOT ONE... "TRAJECTILE TARANTULA!"
THAT'S DUMB
HEY!
WAAH! MOMMY!
WOW!
SO BIG...!

POLICE
MOBIL MASTER!

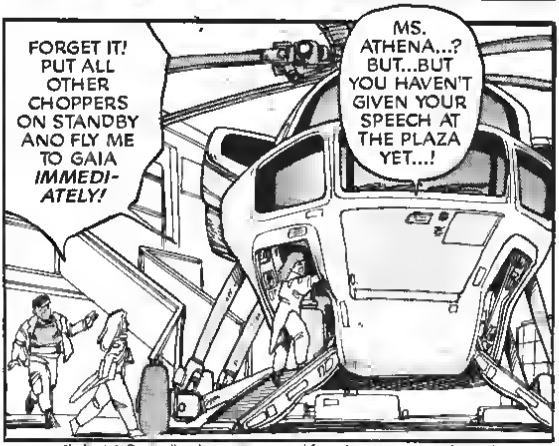

FX: KSHANG KSHANG
WHAT IS IT THOSE BALEFUL LENSES GLARE AT? SECRET REARMAMENT BY THE OLD SUPERPOWERS? THEIR HIDDEN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS?
FOR A MOMENT, LET US PUT ASIDE THE GLOBAL DEBATE OVER THESE MONSTROUS MACHINES AND JUST LOOK AT THE GUN PLATFORMS AS THEY PASS US..
KANG
ITEM


WHAT TH--? DAMN MIRROR ISN'T GIVING ME ANY SUNLIGHT AT ALL!
ISN'T OUR SOLAR HEATER WORK-ING ..?
?
TEACHER SAID I COULD TAKE A BREAK IF I PLUGGED INTO THE HOME MASTER.
DID YOU FINISH YOUR HOME-WORK?
HOME IS BEST STUDIES
GRIND GRIND
KLIK KLIK

*MMMMMMMM
THOSE IRRESPONSIBLE JERKS!! IS THE RECTENNA* BUSTED?!
BIP
WHAT THE HELL'S SHE TRYING TO DO--WIPE OUT THE WHOLE NEXT GENERATION OF BIO-ROIDS?!
GAIA'S OFF OUR POWER FEED-- NO EXPLA-NATION!
HIT THE OVER-LOAD CIRCUITS!
BIP
*TAK TAK
*TAKKA TAK
HEY! THE EMEGENCY NUKE PLANT JUST KICKED IN!
WHAT'S GOING ON? ALL THE HELIOSTATS* IN THE CITY ARE FOCUSING ON OUR TOWER!
BIP
*TAKKA TAK

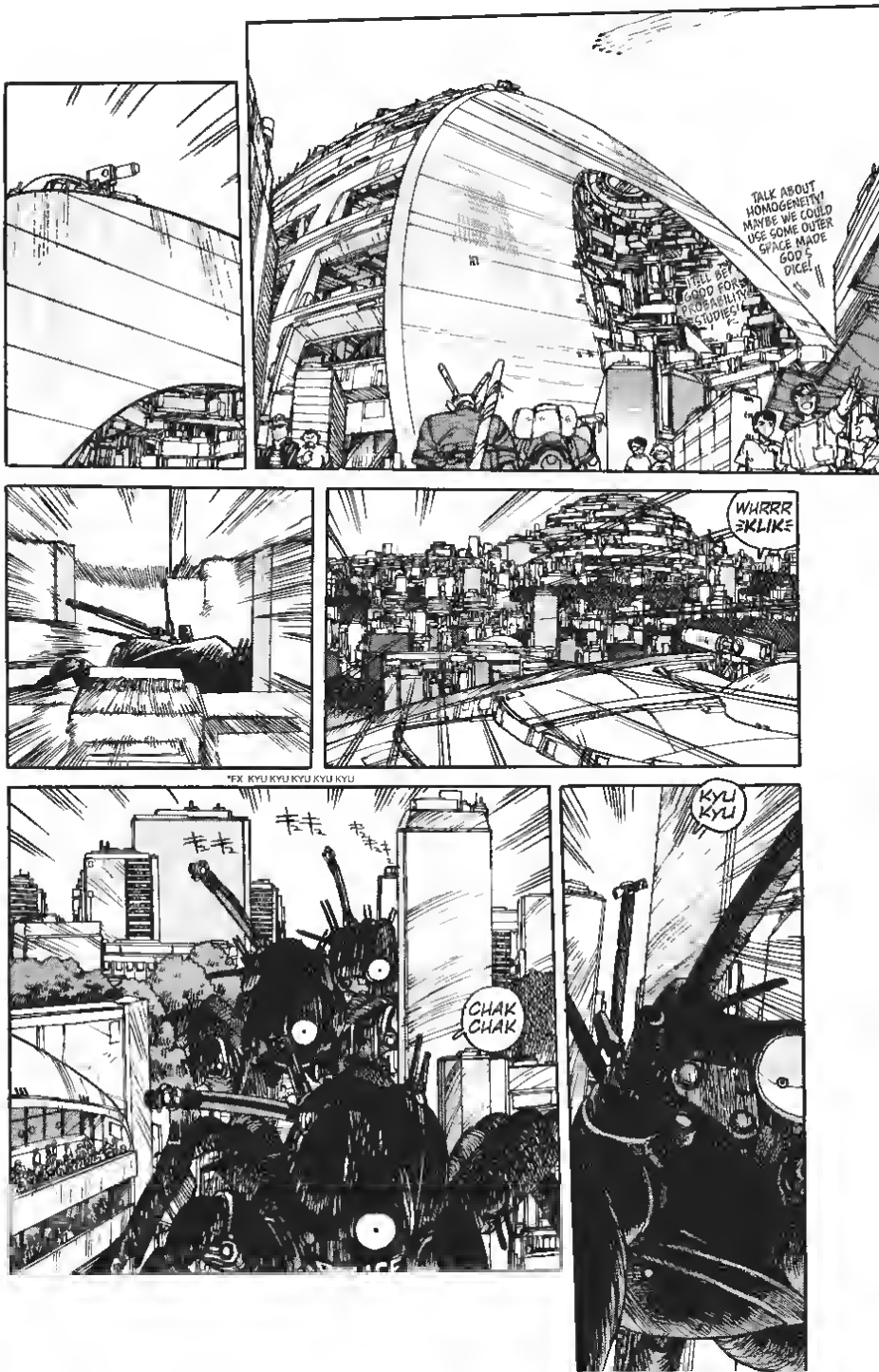


THERE'S AN OPTICAL SIGNALLER ON TOP OF THE GAIA COMPLEX FOR RELAYING COMMANDS TO THE GUN PLATFORMS.
THE FIXED AND VARIABLE STRATEGY PROGRAMS MAY HAVE BEEN REVERSED!
I WANT IT TAKEN OUT *RIGHT NOW!*


FORGET IT! PUT ALL OTHER CHOPPERS ON STANDBY AND FLY ME TO GAIA *IMMEDI-ATELY!*
MS. ATHENA...? BUT...BUT YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN YOUR SPEECH AT THE PLAZA YET...!

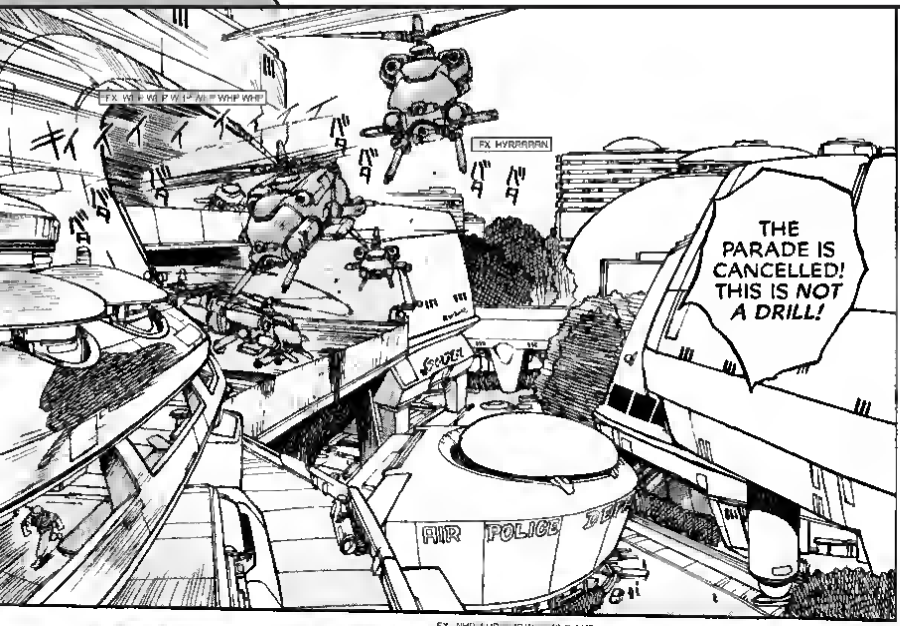
*rectenna: Abbreviation for the roughly 10km in diameter "rece ving antenna" on the surface for receiving microwaves from solar power generation satellites

*heliostat: Originally plane mirrors used for solar power generation in tower condenser systems. Here, it's used on the level of mirrors set up to reflect light


TALK ABOUT HOMOGENEITY! MAYBE WE COULD USE SOME OUTER SPACE MADE GOD'S DICE!
TELL BOY GOOD FOR PROBABILITY STUDIES!
WHRRR =KLIKE
*FX KYU KYU KYU KYU KYU
CHAK CHAK
KYU KYU

KIRI KIRI
KIRI KIRI
*PKOW
*KUUUN
*KYU KYU KYU KYU
TARTARUS
FX: WHKOOM
EH? WHAT'D YOU SAY?
WHOA! WHAT A SHOW !!
FIDDLE SEES

HURRY! WE DON'T WANT TO GET CAUGHT IN THE PANIC!
DAMN! IT'S STARTED!
ZONY
FX: WHP WHP
FX: WHP WHP
I WORRIED TOO MUCH ABOUT THE COUNCIL!
I NEVER THOUGHT SHE'D STRIKE TARTARUS FIRST! DAMN YOU, GAIA!
A MERE MACHINE!
IS THIS HER REVENGE ON BIOROIDS AND THE PLAN...? CAN SHE BE THAT BITTER ABOUT BEING A FOOL?
BUT WHY IS SHE DOING IT? JUST BECAUSE OF THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL...?

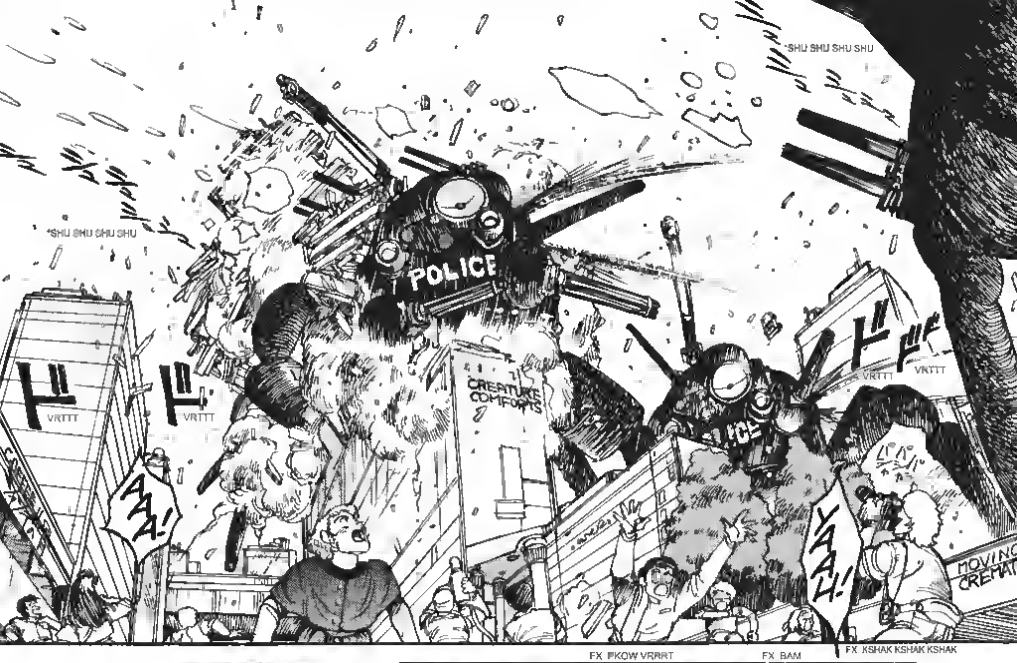

FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
FX: HYRRRRRN
THE PARADE IS CANCELLED! THIS IS *NOT* A DRILL!
AIR POLICE

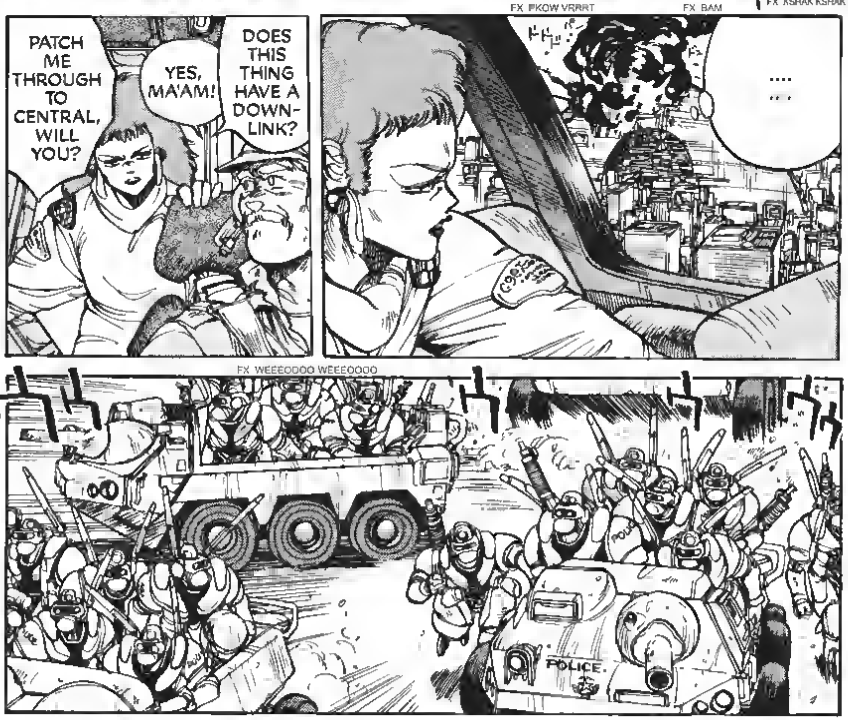
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
GET OUT THERE AND SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU CAN DO! *OUR REP'S ON THE LINE!!*

HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FIGHT WITHOUT BOTH ARMS?!
HAVE *HERMES* RUN A SEARCH FOR THEM!
Y-YES, SIR!

SORRY SIR -- WE CAN'T REACH TEAM LEADERS ARUGESS *OR* BRONTES IN ALL THIS CONFUSION!
WHERE ARE MY *SWAT* TEAMS?!

*FX. SWOOSH
AIEE!
VNN
2
*FX KSSHH
FX KSSH
AA!
IT'S FLYING?!
FX VSSSSHHH
GYEE!
KYAA!
WH!

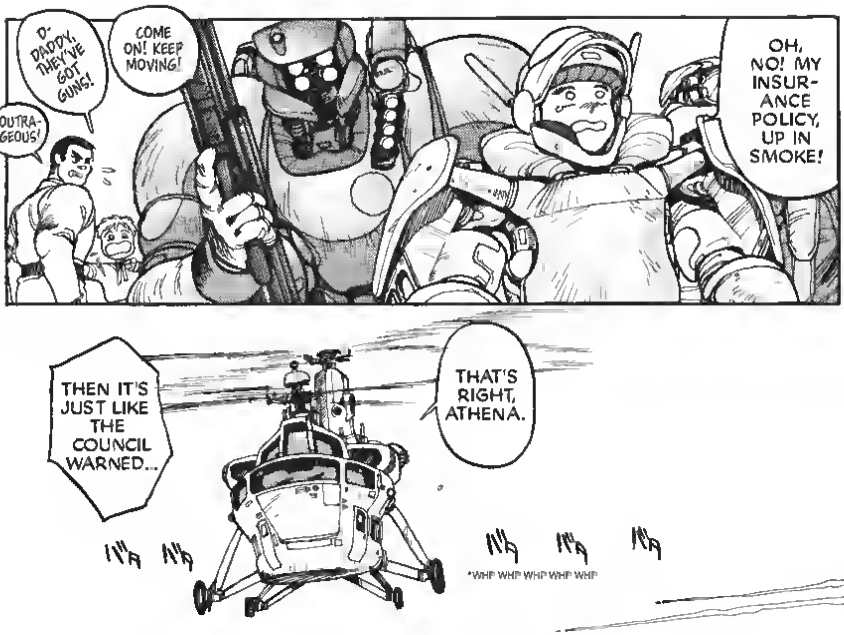

*SHU SHU SHU SHU
*SHU SHU SHU SHU
POLICE
CREATURE COMFORTS
ドド
VRTTT
VRTTT
VRTTT
VRTTT
AAA!
YAAH!
MOVING CREMAT

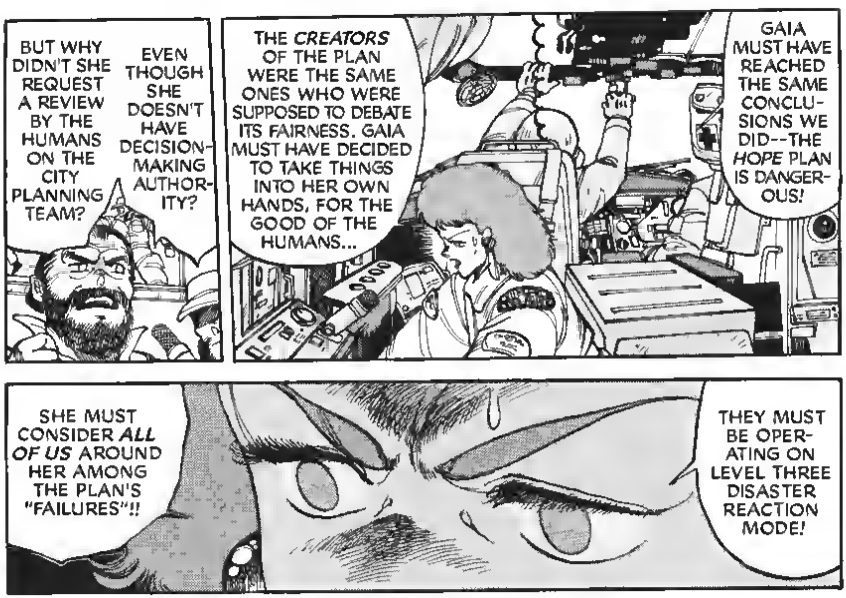

FX: FKOW VRRRT
FX: BAM
FX: KSHAK KSHAK KSHAK
PATCH ME THROUGH TO CENTRAL, WILL YOU?
YES, MA'AM!
DOES THIS THING HAVE A DOWN-LINK?
....
FX: WEEEOOOO WEEEOOOO
POLICE

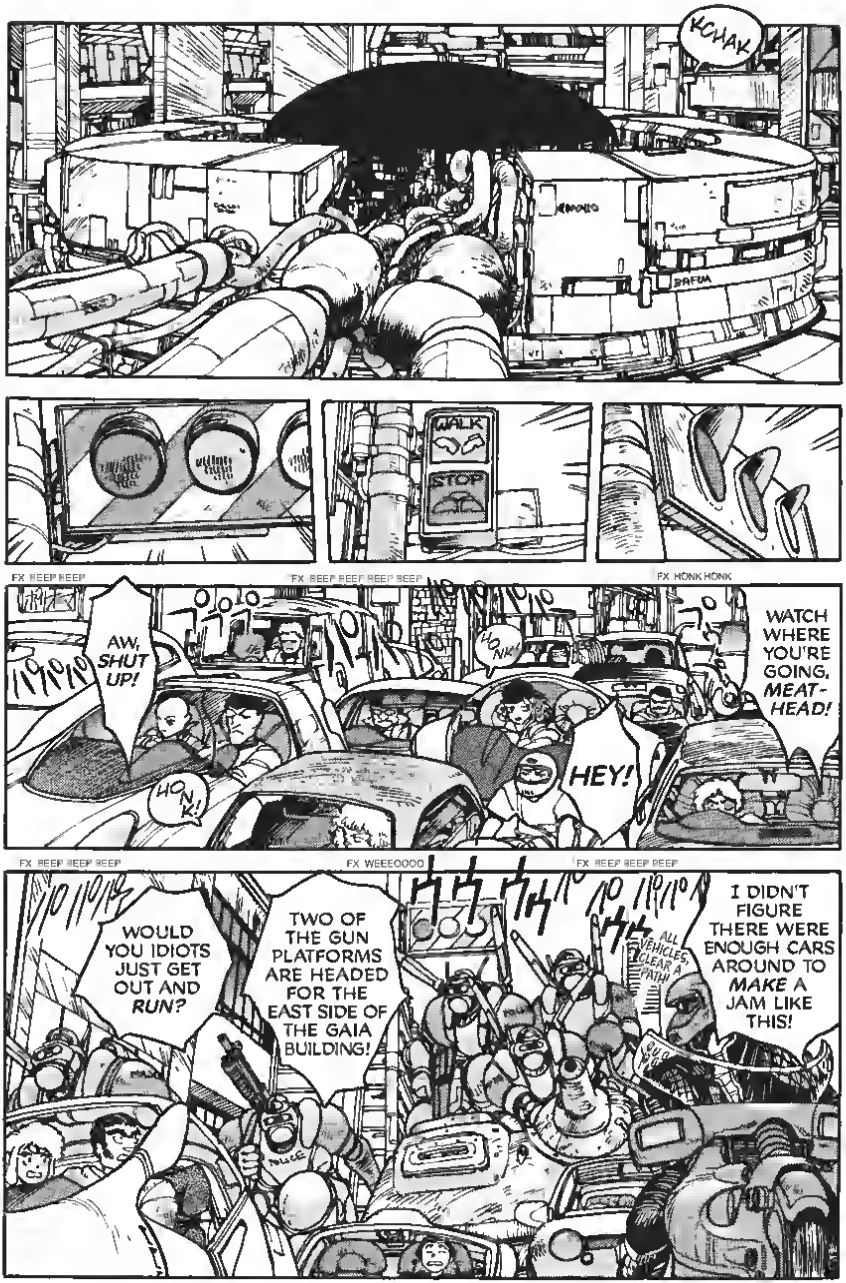
SHELLED?!
WE'VE BEEN SHELLED!
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

FX: KEEET KEEET KEEET
BOOST THE DOMINANCE LOADING FOR DELTA WAVES! DON'T LET THEM HEAR ANY SCREAMS OR EXPLOSIONS!
ACTIVATE THE SHOCK SUPRESSORS IN THE NURSERY!
THAT DAMNED GAIA! WHY DOES SHE WANT TO SMASH TARTARUS?!
EXIT
TARTHRUS

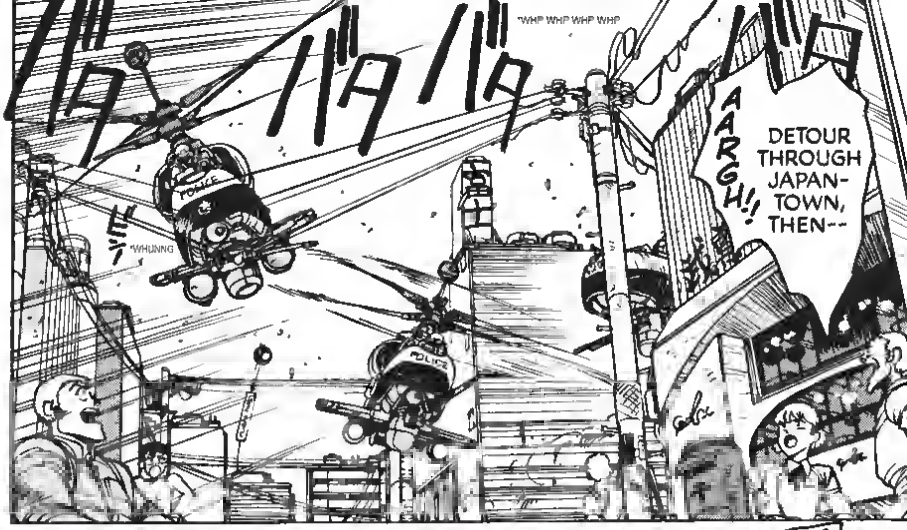
FX: PACHI PACHI
THE BOMBARD-MENT PATTERN'S CLOSING IN ON THE CORE--FIVE METERS A SECOND!
NO GOOD. BREACHED!
WHAT ABOUT THE FIRE-WALLS?
THE IMPACT SITES ARE TOO WIDELY DISPERSED.. WE CAN'T FIGHT ALL THE FIRES AT ONCE!
WHKOOM
WHRAM
TARTHRUS
WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER! HELP ME EVACUATE THE DATA ROOM!
GAIA'S GONE BERSERK! YOU FIGURE THIS IS SOME KINDA PLOT?

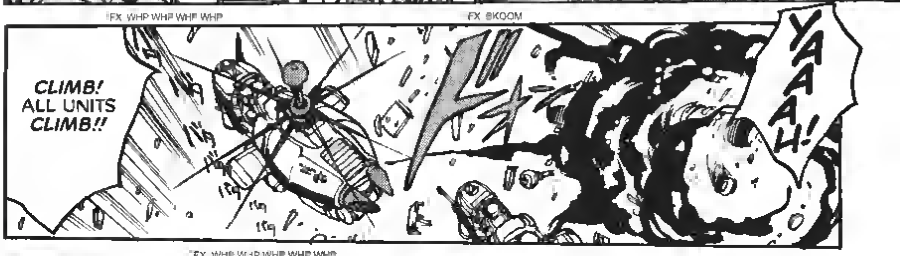

D-DADDY, THEY'VE GOT GUNS!
COME ON! KEEP MOVING!
OUTRAGEOUS!
OH, NO! MY INSURANCE POLICY, UP IN SMOKE!
THEN IT'S JUST LIKE THE COUNCIL WARNED...
THAT'S RIGHT, ATHENA.
*WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP

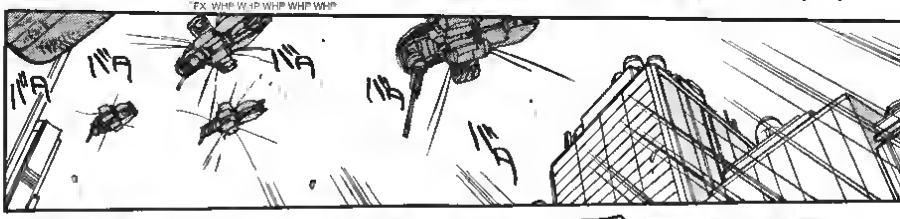

BUT WHY DIDN'T SHE REQUEST A REVIEW BY THE HUMANS ON THE CITY PLANNING TEAM?
EVEN THOUGH SHE DOESN'T HAVE DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY?
THE *CREATORS* OF THE PLAN WERE THE SAME ONES WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO DEBATE ITS FAIRNESS. GAIA MUST HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE THINGS INTO HER OWN HANDS, FOR THE GOOD OF THE HUMANS...
GAIA MUST HAVE REACHED THE SAME CONCLUSIONS WE DID--THE *HOPE* PLAN IS DANGEROUS!
SHE MUST CONSIDER *ALL OF US* AROUND HER AMONG THE PLAN'S "FAILURES"!!
THEY MUST BE OPERATING ON LEVEL THREE DISASTER REACTION MODE!

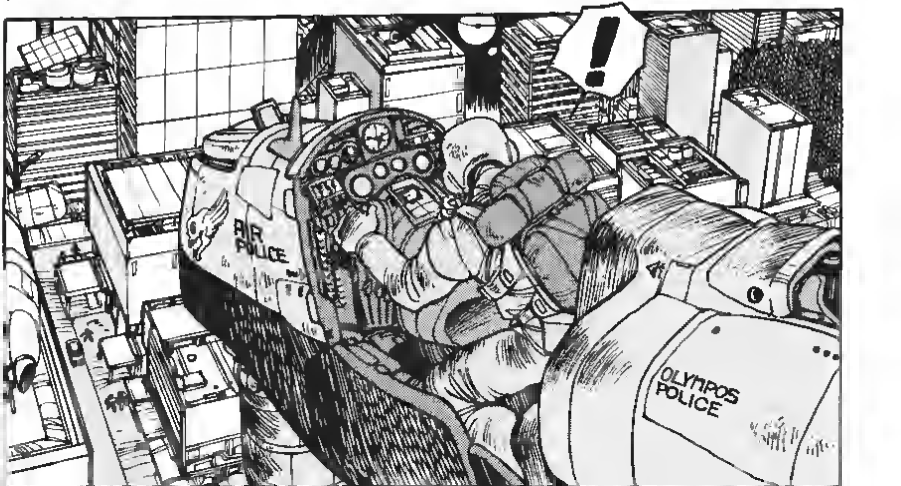

KCHAK
WALK
STOP
FX BEEP BEEP
FX BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP
FX HONK HONK
AW, SHUT UP!
HONK!
HONK!
WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, MEAT-HEAD!
HEY!
FX BEEP BEEP BEEP
FX WEEEOOOO
FX BEEP BEEP BEEP
WOULD YOU IDIOTS JUST GET OUT AND RUN?
TWO OF THE GUN PLATFORMS ARE HEADED FOR THE EAST SIDE OF THE GAIA BUILDING!
ALL VEHICLES CLEAR A PATH
I DIDN'T FIGURE THERE WERE ENOUGH CARS AROUND TO MAKE A JAM LIKE THIS!

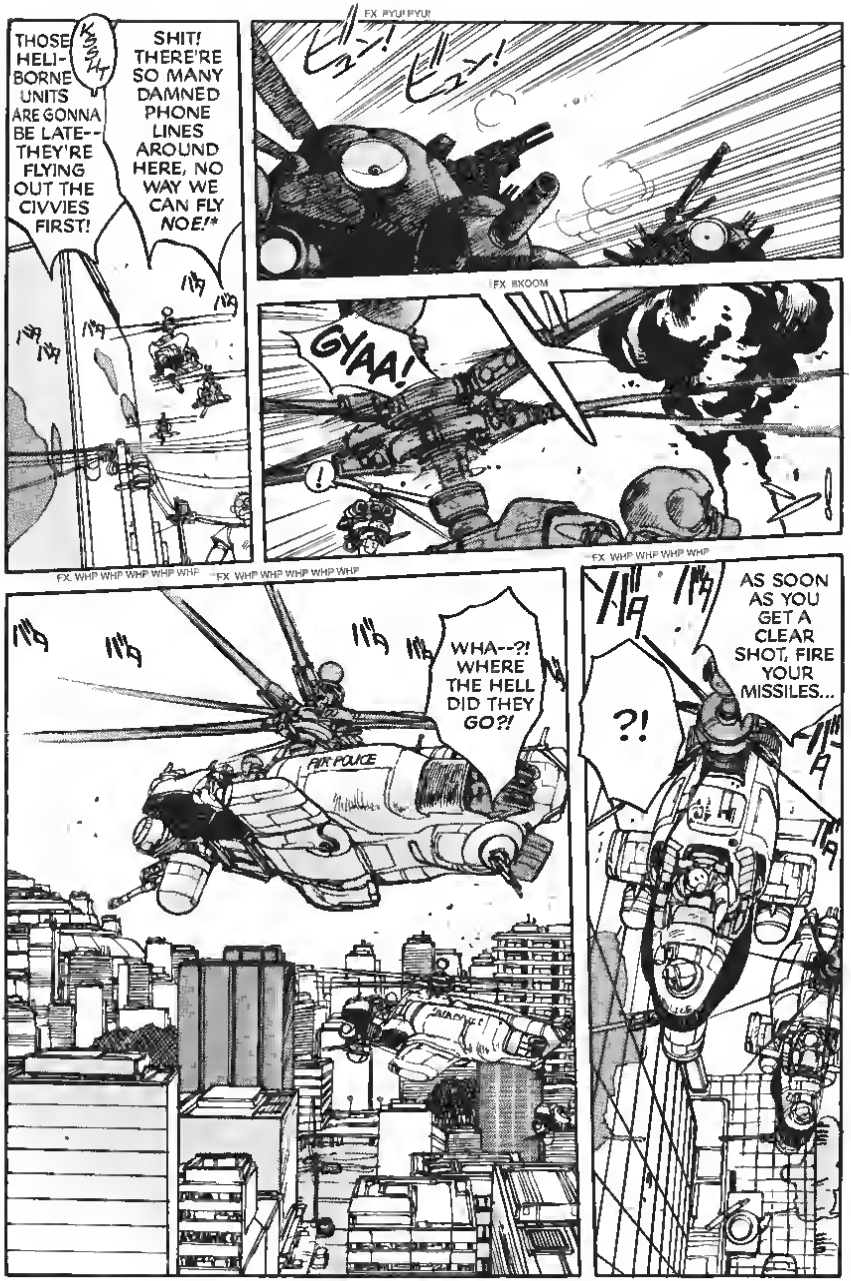
GOOD LUCK!
IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GO BACK TO BEING "ARUGESS" I'LL GIVE YOU WHAT SUPPORT I CAN.
BUTTON IT, DEUNAN. WE'RE MOVING OUT.
?
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE-- *CINDER-ELLA?!*
YOU! YOU PLANNED TO BUG OUT THIS WAY RIGHT FROM THE *BEGIN-NING!*
DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET ME THROUGH TO *ESWAT!!*
GIVE *TOP PRIORITY* TO SHUTTING DOWN GAIA! JUST PROTECT-ING TARTARUS ISN'T ENOUGH!
COME *ON,* ALREADY! MAKE UP YOUR MIND!
HEY!
NOW THE DAMN THINGS ARE MOVING *WEST?!*
*FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP
WORRY ABOUT THE CIVILIANS LATER!


*WHP WHP WHP WHP
POLICE
*WHUNNG
POLICE
AARGH!!
DETOUR THROUGH JAPAN-TOWN, THEN--


FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP
FX: BKOOM
CLIMB! ALL UNITS CLIMB!!
YAAA!!


FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP


!
AIR POLICE
OLYMPOS POLICE

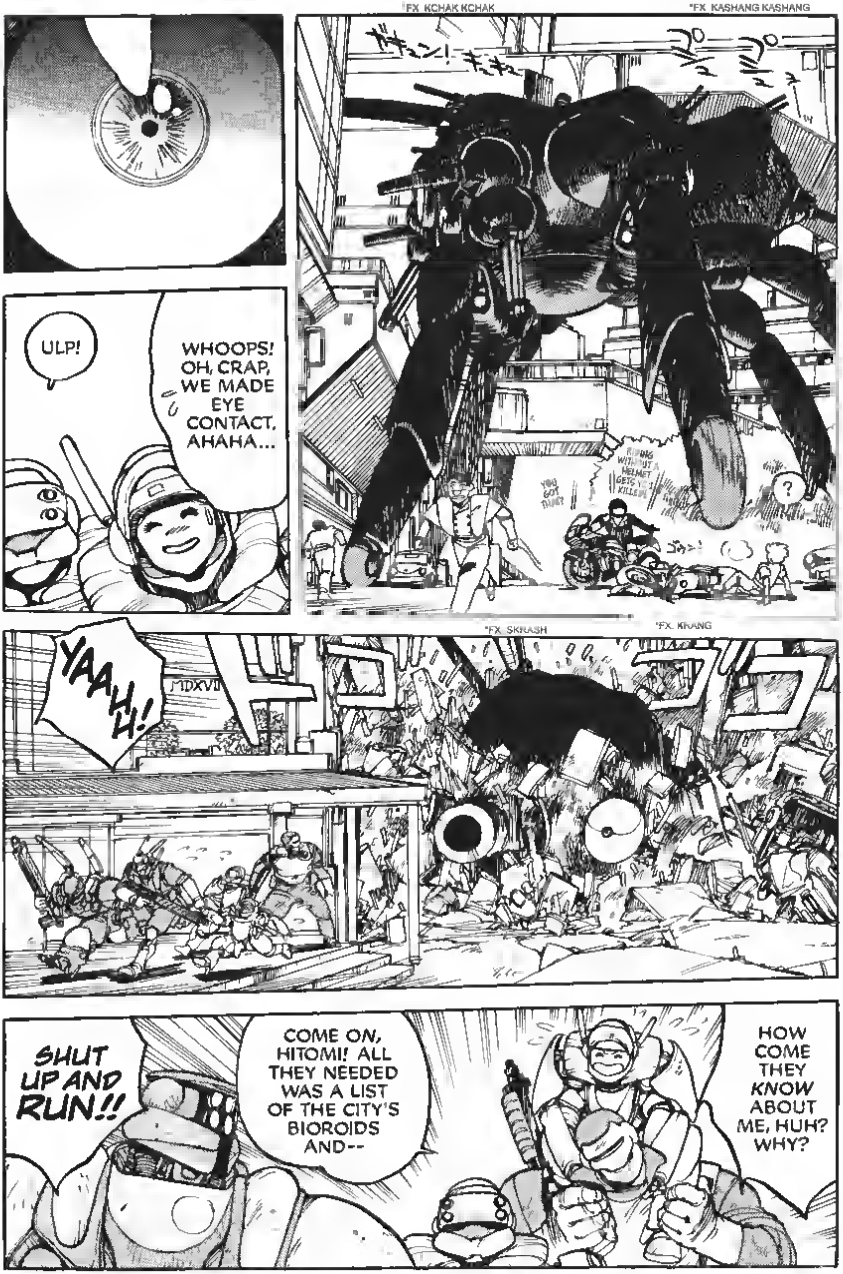

FX: PYUU! PYU!
ヒュン! ヒュン!
FX: BKOOM
GYAA!
!
THOSE HELI-BORNE UNITS ARE GONNA BE LATE-- THEY'RE FLYING OUT THE CIVVIES FIRST!
KSHT
SHIT! THERE'RE SO MANY DAMNED PHONE LINES AROUND HERE, NO WAY WE CAN FLY NOE!*
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
WHA--?! WHERE THE HELL DID THEY GO?!
AIR POLICE
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP
?!
AS SOON AS YOU GET A CLEAR SHOT, FIRE YOUR MISSILES...

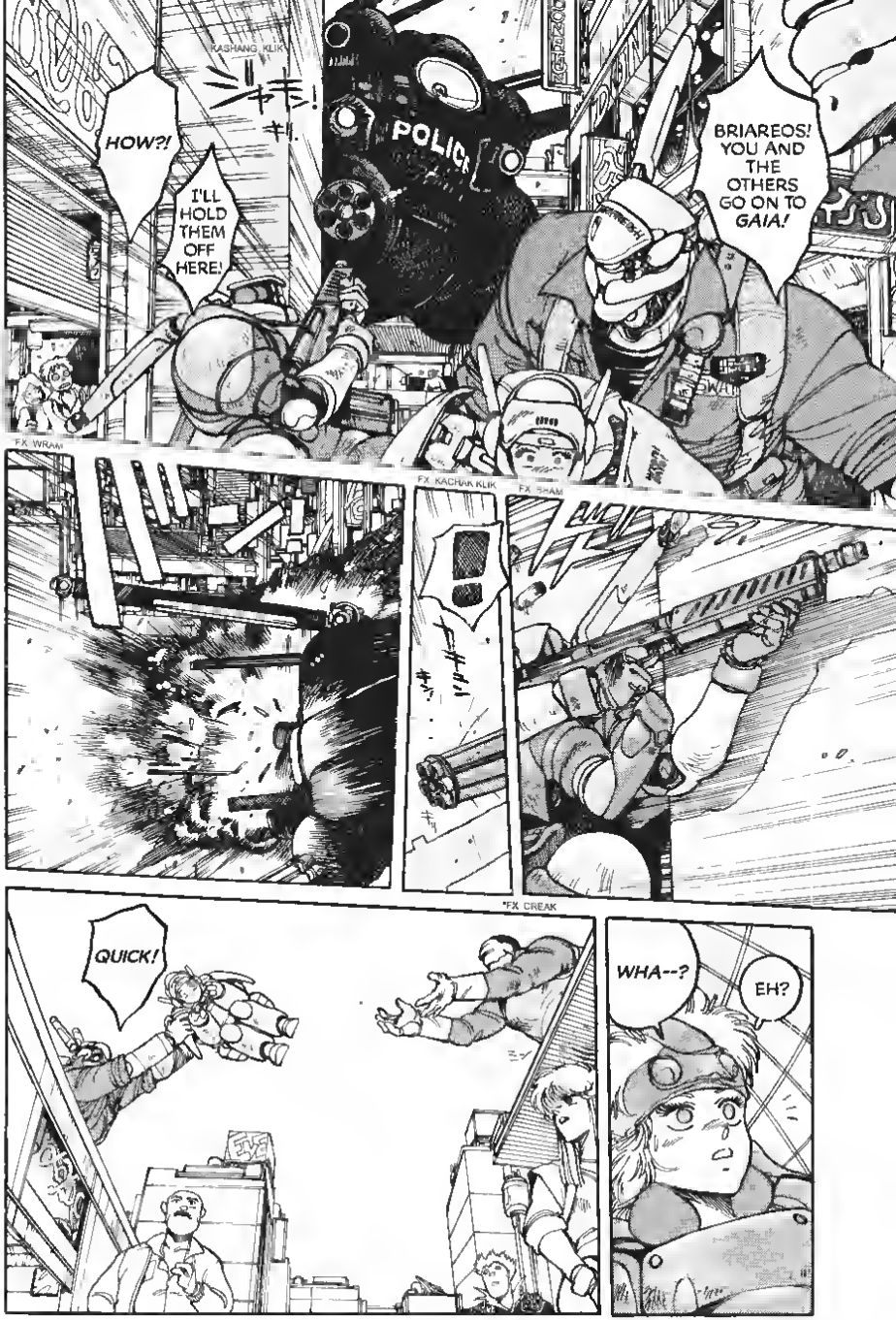
*Nap of the Earth: skimming the ground to avoid detection. A standard heliborne tactic.

...AND ARE ON A COURSE THAT WILL TAKE THEM TO THE TARTARUS ARCOLOGY.
THERE'S BEEN A SITUATION UPDATE-- SIX OF THE GUN PLATFORMS HAVE EVADED THE AIR POLICE..
ESWAT
HAS THIS BEEN CONFIRMED BY ATHENA? VERY WELL, THEN.
WHAT?! GAIA'S USING GUN PLATFORMS TO ATTACK *TARTARUS*?! ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
SQUAD ONE COMES WITH ME TO TAKE OUT GAIA'S OPTICAL COMMUNICATIONS TOWER. SQUAD TWO, GIVE US FIRE SUPPORT. THREE, CORDON THE AREA. FOUR, SET UP NEAR THE ENTRANCES TO THE TARTARUS BLOCK-- WHEN THE PLATFORMS SHOW, KNOCK OUT THEIR ANTENNAS. FIVE--
SQUADS FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX-- REVERSE COURSE.
FX SKREEE
!
ESWAT

*FX. PSHHH
ONE OF THE PLAT-FORMS?!
*FX. KSHANG KSHANG
IT'S OKAY-- WE'VE PLANNED FOR THIS...
THEY OVER-TOOK US!
*FX. KSHANG KSHANG
SEND OVER A HELI-COPTER AND I CAN BE THERE RIGHT AWA--
SORRY I'M LATE, DIRECTOR!

IF THEY SUSPECT THERE'S EVEN ONE SPY OUT THERE, THEY'LL TURN THE DEPARTMENT UPSIDE DOWN! HE CAN'T AFFORD TO HAVE HIS COVER BLOWN--THIS ISN'T HIS ONLY MISSION!
LOOK! PUT YOUR-SELF IN HIS PLACE!
BUT...!
FX. AIEEE
わぁぁぁ
ドドド
*RMMMB
ARE YOU STILL ON ABOUT THAT?
JUST LISTEN TO ME, WILL YOU?!
BESIDES, THIS WAY HE CAN GET A BETTER LOOK AT THE ENEMY!
YOU SHUT UP!
NO ARGUE DURING OP, STU-PID
BUT, BRIAREOS! DON'T YOU THINK HE--
FX. SKRASSSH
FX. PSSSH
FX. SKISHSASH


*FX. KCHAK KCHAK
*FX. KASHANG KASHANG
ULP!
WHOOPS! OH, CRAP, WE MADE EYE CONTACT. AHAHA...
*FX. SKRASH
*FX. KRANG
YAAH!
SHUT UP AND RUN!!
COME ON, HITOMI! ALL THEY NEEDED WAS A LIST OF THE CITY'S BIOROIDS AND--
HOW COME THEY KNOW ABOUT ME, HUH? WHY?

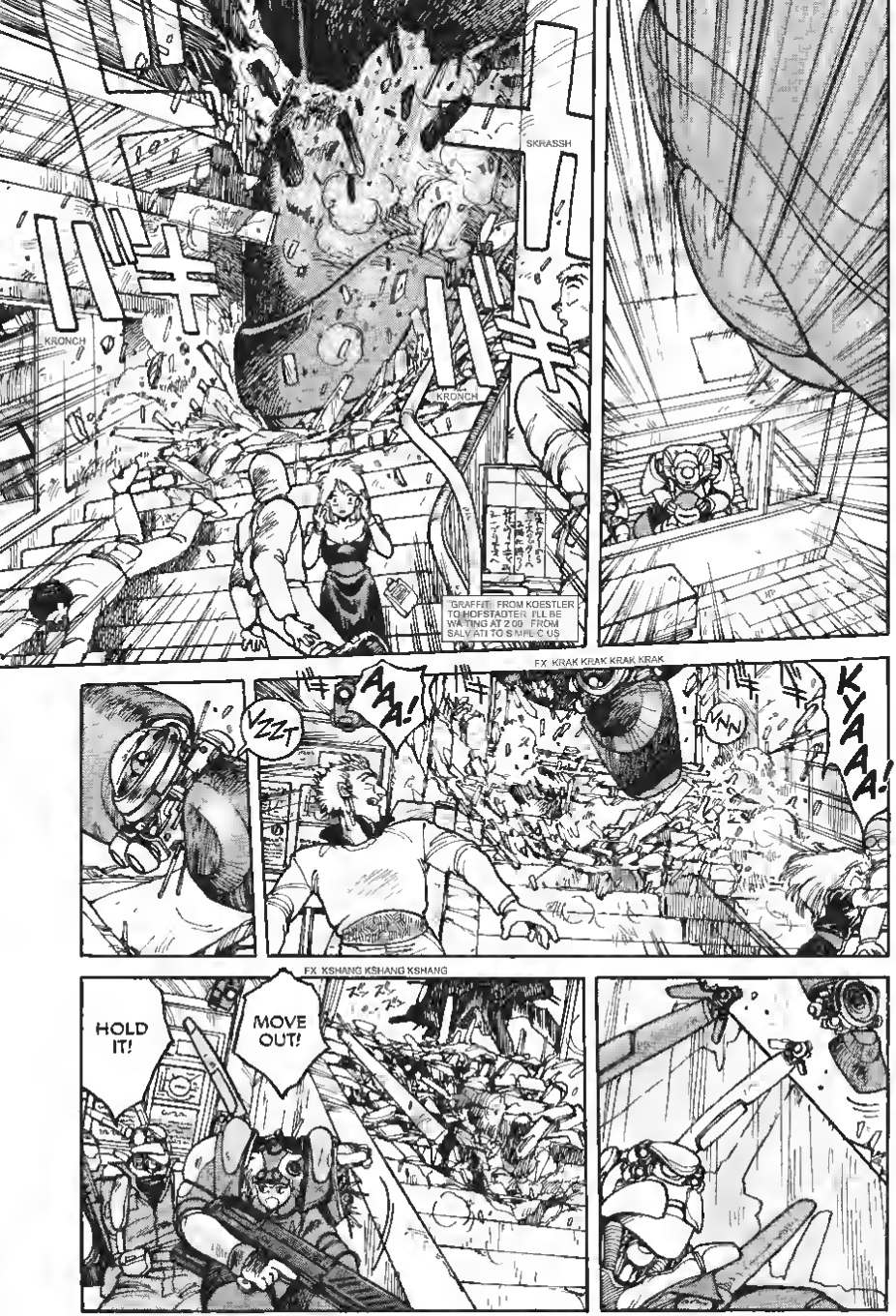

KASHANG KLIK
HOW?!
I'LL HOLD THEM OFF HERE!
POLICE
BRIAREOS! YOU AND THE OTHERS GO ON TO GAIA!
*FX WRAM
FX KACHAK KLIK
FX *SHAM
*FX CREAK
QUICK!
WHA--?
EH?

FX: VRTTT
CHAKING
FSHUUUU
POLICE
FX: BROARRR
GYA A!
FX: SPAK
AAA!
FSSHT
CE

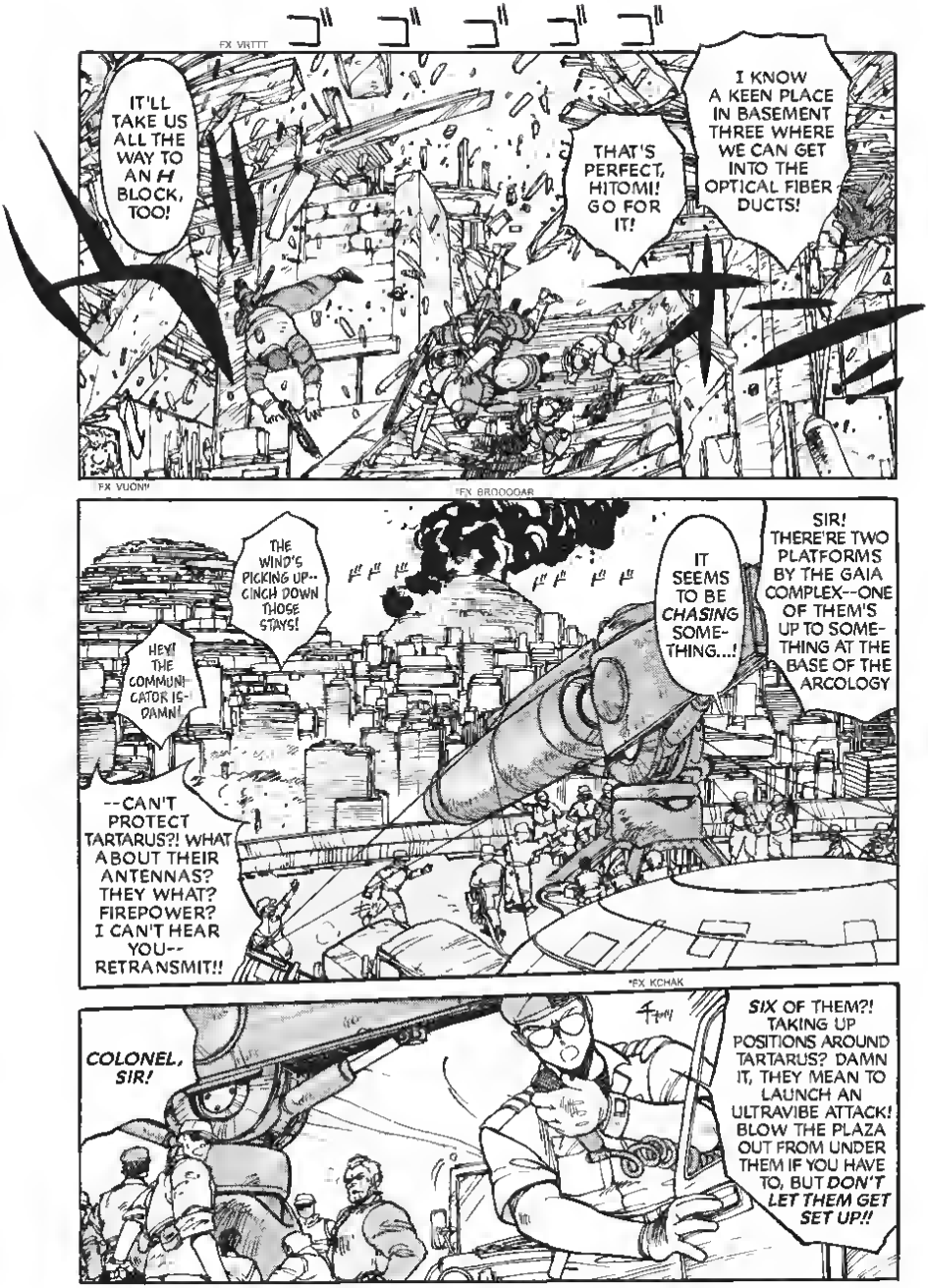
*FX. SFAK
*KANG
*BAM
*BAM
*SKRSHH
*FX. KRAK
FX. KIRI KIRI KIRI
DEUNAN!
*FX. SKNCH

*BRTTT
ｸｸ ｸｸｸ~!!
FX WHSST
*FX BRTTT
TOO HEAVY!!
*FX BDOOOOOSH
*FX SKRASH
HAH?

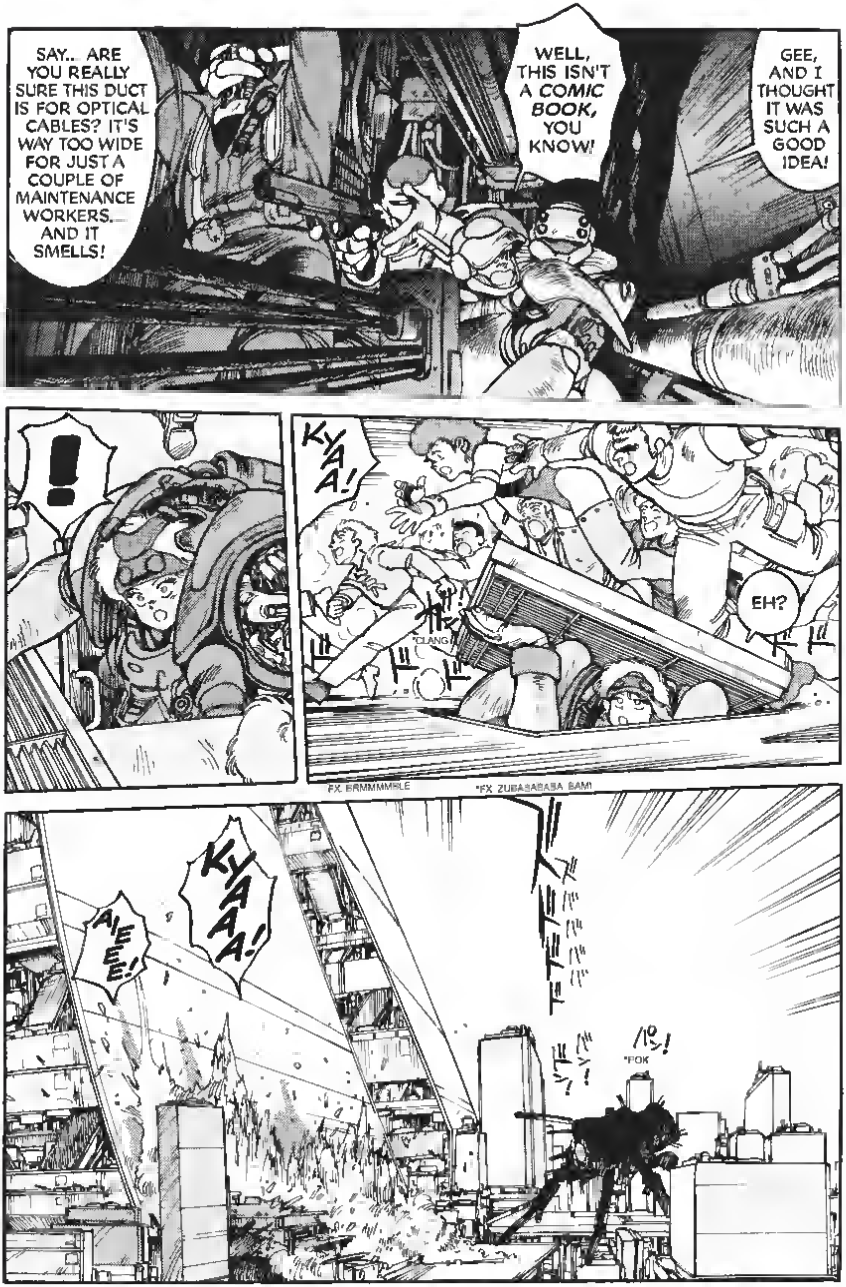
*FX: DRN DRN DRN DRN DRN
YOU REALLY HAD ME WORRIED!
IDIOT!
WH... WHERE'S MY KISS, PRINCE CHARMING?
DEUNAN!!
UH...
GUGG!
DEUNAN!
FX: VRT RTT
GEEZ! QUIT FOLLOWING US, WILL YA?!
FX: ZUZUZU
Sign: MAGLEV TRAIN ENTRANCE
LINEAR TUBE
電浮列車 乗口
HEY! OVER HERE!
YO!
CELINE

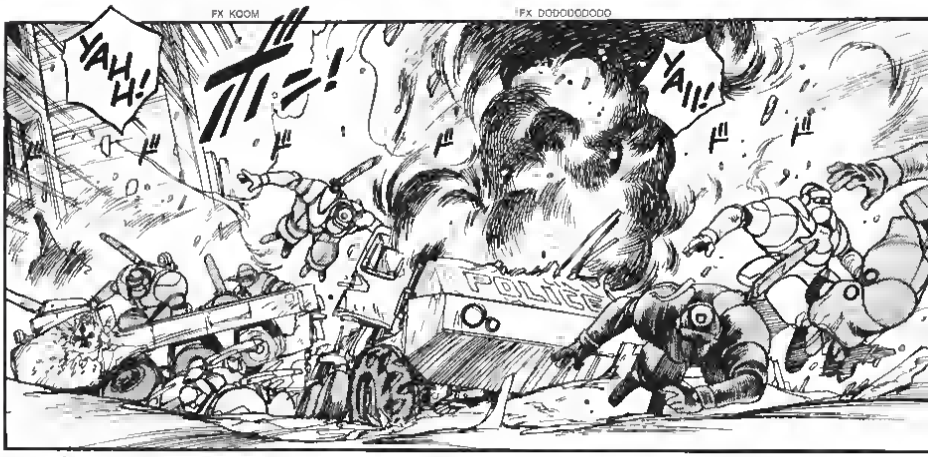

SKRASSH
KRONCH
KRONCH
"GRAFFITI FROM KOESTLER TO HOFSTADTER. I'LL BE WAITING AT 2:00 FROM SALVATI TO SIMPLICUS
FX KRAK KRAK KRAK KRAK
VZZZT
AAA!
VNN
KYAAA!
FX XSHANG KSHANG KSHANG
HOLD IT!
MOVE OUT!

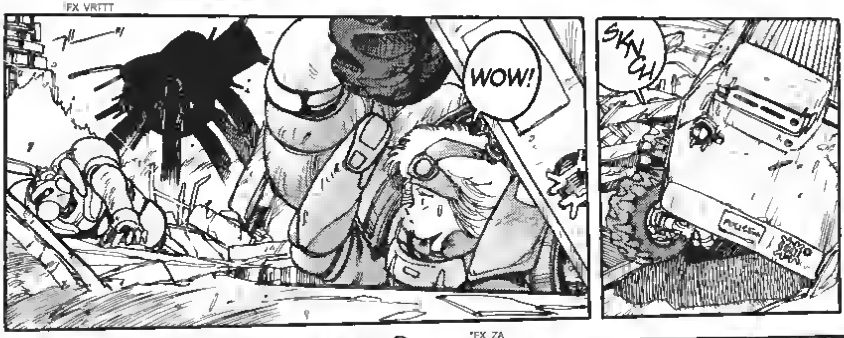
YAAA-H!
VNN
BUT IF IT LINKS UP WITH GAIA'S SECU-RITY SYS-TEMS...
CLAP CLAP
IT'S CONTACTING GAIA THROUGH THE PUBLIC INFONET! WOW! I'M IMPRESSED!
?!
CHIK
CHIK CHIK CHIK
POLICE
FX. PSSHHH
HERE IT COMES!
beep beep
UH OH!


SFX VRTTT
IT'LL TAKE US ALL THE WAY TO AN H BLOCK, TOO!
THAT'S PERFECT, HITOMI! GO FOR IT!
I KNOW A KEEN PLACE IN BASEMENT THREE WHERE WE CAN GET INTO THE OPTICAL FIBER DUCTS!
SFX VUON!!
*SFX BROOOOAR
THE WIND'S PICKING UP-- CINCH DOWN THOSE STAYS!
HEY! THE COMMUNI-CATOR IS-- DAMN!
IT SEEMS TO BE CHASING SOME-THING...!
SIR! THERE'RE TWO PLATFORMS BY THE GAIA COMPLEX--ONE OF THEM'S UP TO SOME-THING AT THE BASE OF THE ARCOLOGY
--CAN'T PROTECT TARTARUS?! WHAT ABOUT THEIR ANTENNAS? THEY WHAT? FIREPOWER? I CAN'T HEAR YOU-- RETRANSMIT!!
*SFX KCHAK
COLONEL, SIR!
SIX OF THEM?! TAKING UP POSITIONS AROUND TARTARUS? DAMN IT, THEY MEAN TO LAUNCH AN ULTRAVIBE ATTACK! BLOW THE PLAZA OUT FROM UNDER THEM IF YOU HAVE TO, BUT DON'T LET THEM GET SET UP!!

WELL, IS IT UNDER CONTROL? YOU DON'T NEED TO BLOW THE TOWER?
!
YES, SIR! I MEAN, NO, SIR! WE CUT THE CABLES AND SECURED THE COMMUNICATION GRID, BUT...
THERE'S STILL NO CHANGE IN THEIR MOVEMENTS, EVEN WITH THE COMMUNICATION GRID OUT?!
FX: BRMMMBLE
FX: BASHUN BASHUN BASHUN
PSSSSH
WE CAN'T GET THROUGH HERE IN THESE SUITS! WOULDN'T IT MAKE MORE SENSE TO GO BACK TOPSIDE?
I SWITCHED OVER TO MY INNER EAR...
HOW'S YOUR GYRO, BRI?
WELL, AT LEAST THIS IS CLEANER THAN A SEWER!
TANG! KARA KARA
SHU SHU SHU SHU


SAY.. ARE YOU REALLY SURE THIS DUCT IS FOR OPTICAL CABLES? IT'S WAY TOO WIDE FOR JUST A COUPLE OF MAINTENANCE WORKERS... AND IT SMELLS!
WELL, THIS ISN'T A COMIC BOOK, YOU KNOW!
GEE, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS SUCH A GOOD IDEA!
!
KYAA!
*CLANG
EH?
FX: BRMMMMMLE
*FX: ZUBABABABA BAM!
KYAAA!
AIEEE!
*FOK

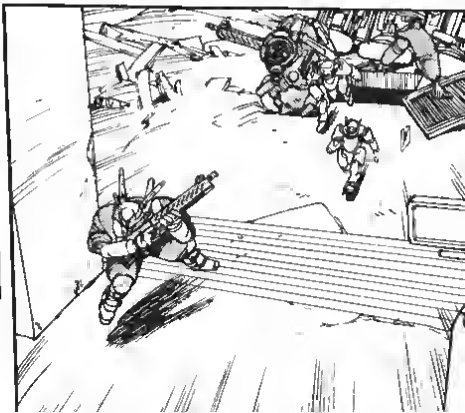

FX KOOM
FX DODODODODO
YAH H!
ドニ!
YA!!
POLICE


FX VRTTT
WOW!
SKNCH

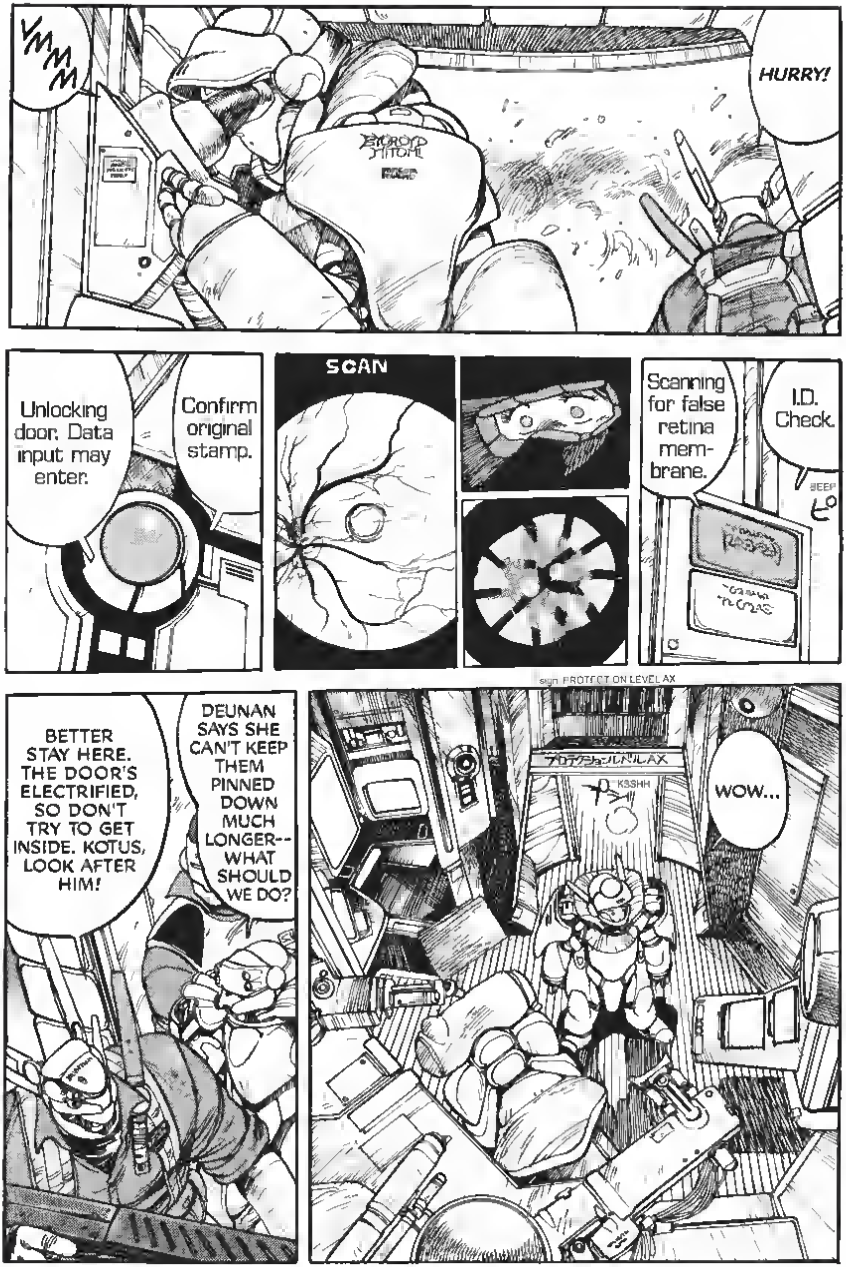
ACTUALLY, THERE'S A WHOLE BUNCH OF "H BLOCKS." THEY CALL THEM LOCKBOXES-- ONE'S RIGHT OVER THERE.

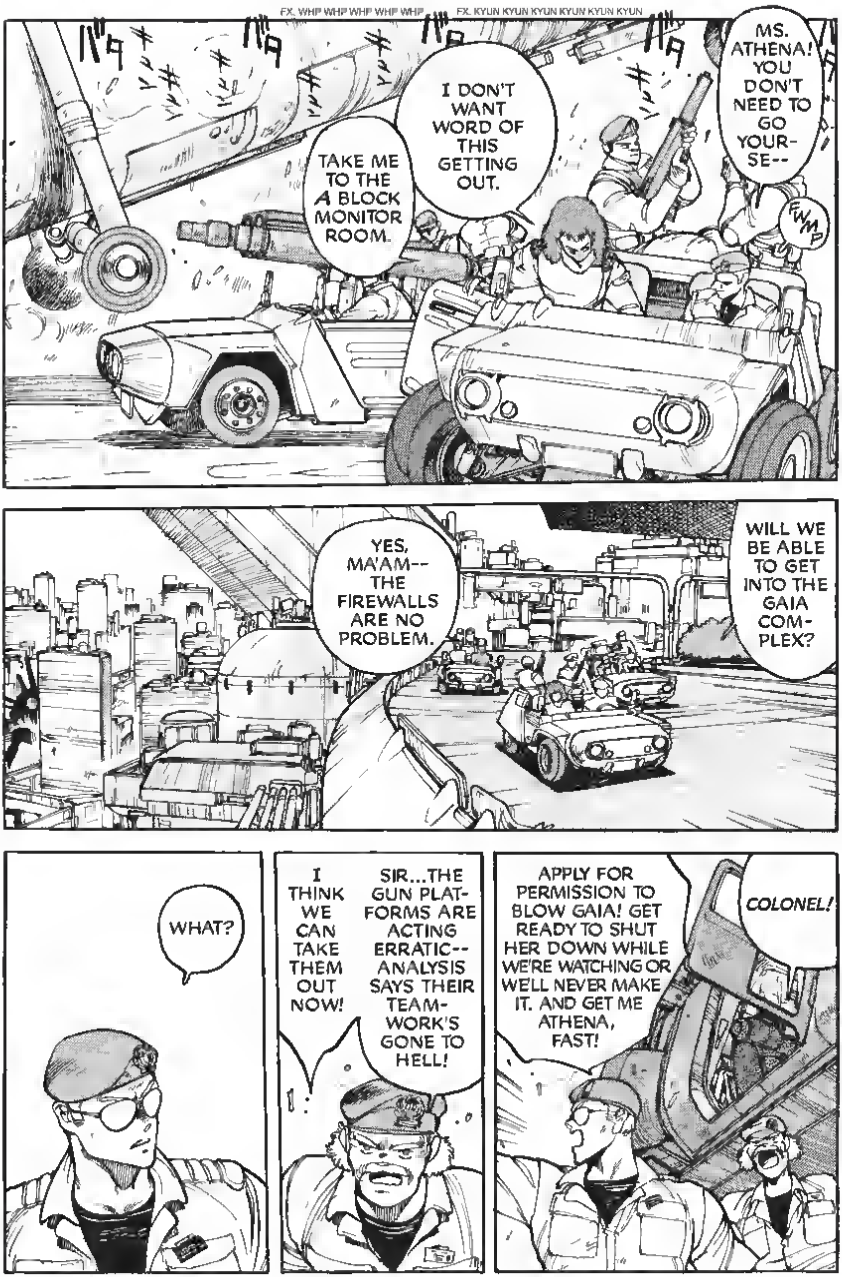
WHA--?
FX. TP TP TP TP

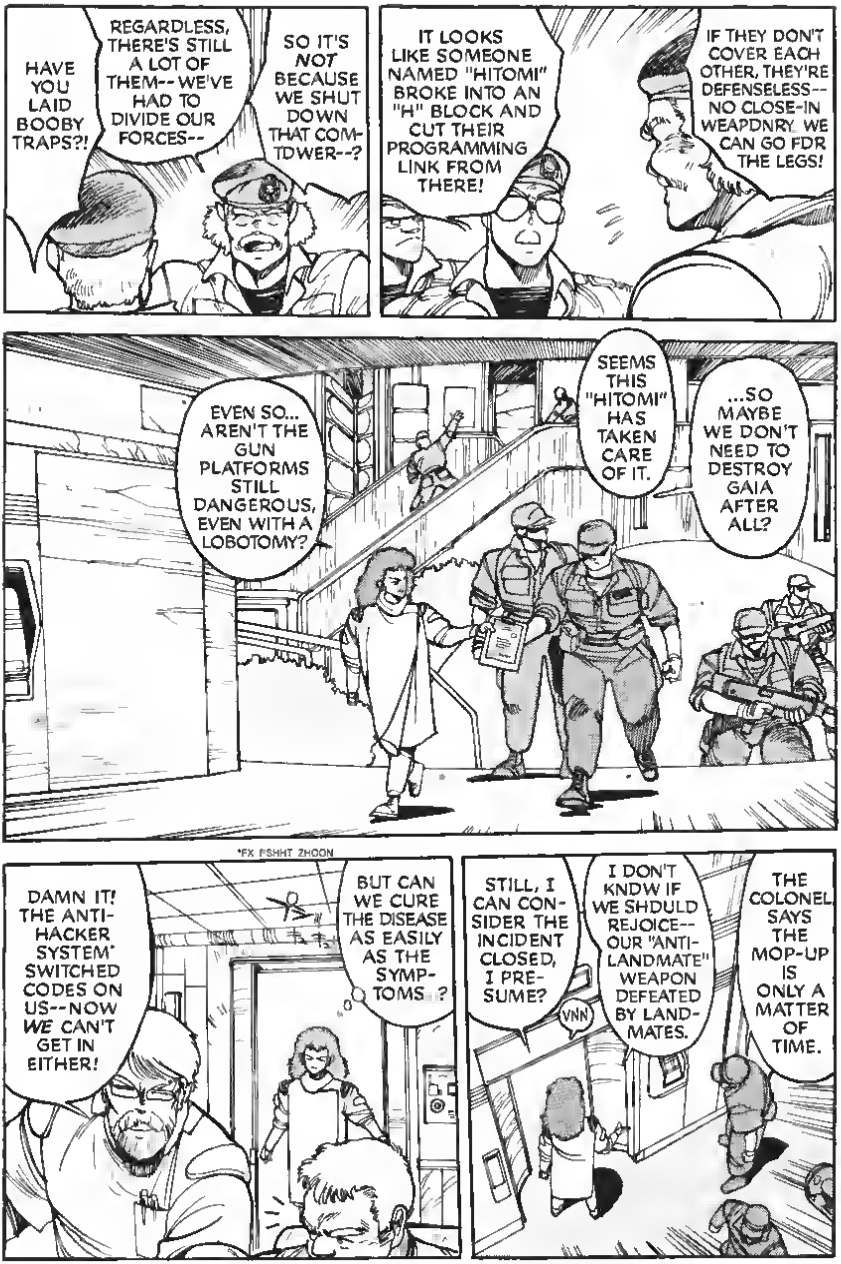
FX ZA



HEY! FREEZE!
!
!
*FX: BRTTT BRRT
*FX: BAM BAM BAM
DON'T SHOOT, IT'S ME!
DAMN IT, WHERE IS HE?
AAA>!
AAAA
OW!
!?
*FX: POW
*FX: SPAK SPAK
*FX: KOFF KOFF
VNN
VZZZT CHAK
beep
CARD! CARD!
AAA>!
ボゴ
*FX: BRTTT
*FX: SKRAK


VMMM
HURRY!
Unlocking door. Data input may enter.
Confirm original stamp.
SCAN
Scanning for false retina membrane.
I.D. Check.
BEEP
PROTECT ON LEVEL AX
BETTER STAY HERE. THE DOOR'S ELECTRIFIED, SO DON'T TRY TO GET INSIDE. KOTUS, LOOK AFTER HIM!
DEUNAN SAYS SHE CAN'T KEEP THEM PINNED DOWN MUCH LONGER--WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
WOW...


FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
FX. KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN
TAKE ME TO THE A BLOCK MONITOR ROOM.
I DON'T WANT WORD OF THIS GETTING OUT.
MS. ATHENA! YOU DON'T NEED TO GO YOUR-SE--
FWMP
YES, MA'AM-- THE FIREWALLS ARE NO PROBLEM.
WILL WE BE ABLE TO GET INTO THE GAIA COM-PLEX?
WHAT?
I THINK WE CAN TAKE THEM OUT NOW!
SIR...THE GUN PLAT-FORMS ARE ACTING ERRATIC-- ANALYSIS SAYS THEIR TEAM-WORK'S GONE TO HELL!
APPLY FOR PERMISSION TO BLOW GAIA! GET READY TO SHUT HER DOWN WHILE WE'RE WATCHING OR WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT. AND GET ME ATHENA, FAST!
COLONEL!


HAVE YOU LAID BOOBY TRAPS?!
REGARDLESS, THERE'S STILL A LOT OF THEM--WE'VE HAD TO DIVIDE OUR FORCES--
SO IT'S NOT BECAUSE WE SHUT DOWN THAT COM-TOWER--?
IT LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE NAMED "HITOMI" BROKE INTO AN "H" BLOCK AND CUT THEIR PROGRAMMING LINK FROM THERE!
IF THEY DON'T COVER EACH OTHER, THEY'RE DEFENSELESS--NO CLOSE-IN WEAPONRY. WE CAN GO FOR THE LEGS!
EVEN SO... AREN'T THE GUN PLATFORMS STILL DANGEROUS, EVEN WITH A LOBOTOMY?
SEEMS THIS "HITOMI" HAS TAKEN CARE OF IT.
...SO MAYBE WE DON'T NEED TO DESTROY GAIA AFTER ALL?
*FX FSHHT ZHOON
DAMN IT! THE ANTI-HACKER SYSTEM* SWITCHED CODES ON US--NOW WE CAN'T GET IN EITHER!
BUT CAN WE CURE THE DISEASE AS EASILY AS THE SYMP-TOMS...?
STILL, I CAN CONSIDER THE INCIDENT CLOSED, I PRESUME?
VNN
I DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD REJOICE--OUR "ANTI-LANDMATE" WEAPON DEFEATED BY LANDMATES.
THE COLONEL SAYS THE MOP-UP IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.

*anti hacker system: A system to defend against unauthorized intrusion into, manipulation of, and data retrieval from computer circuits

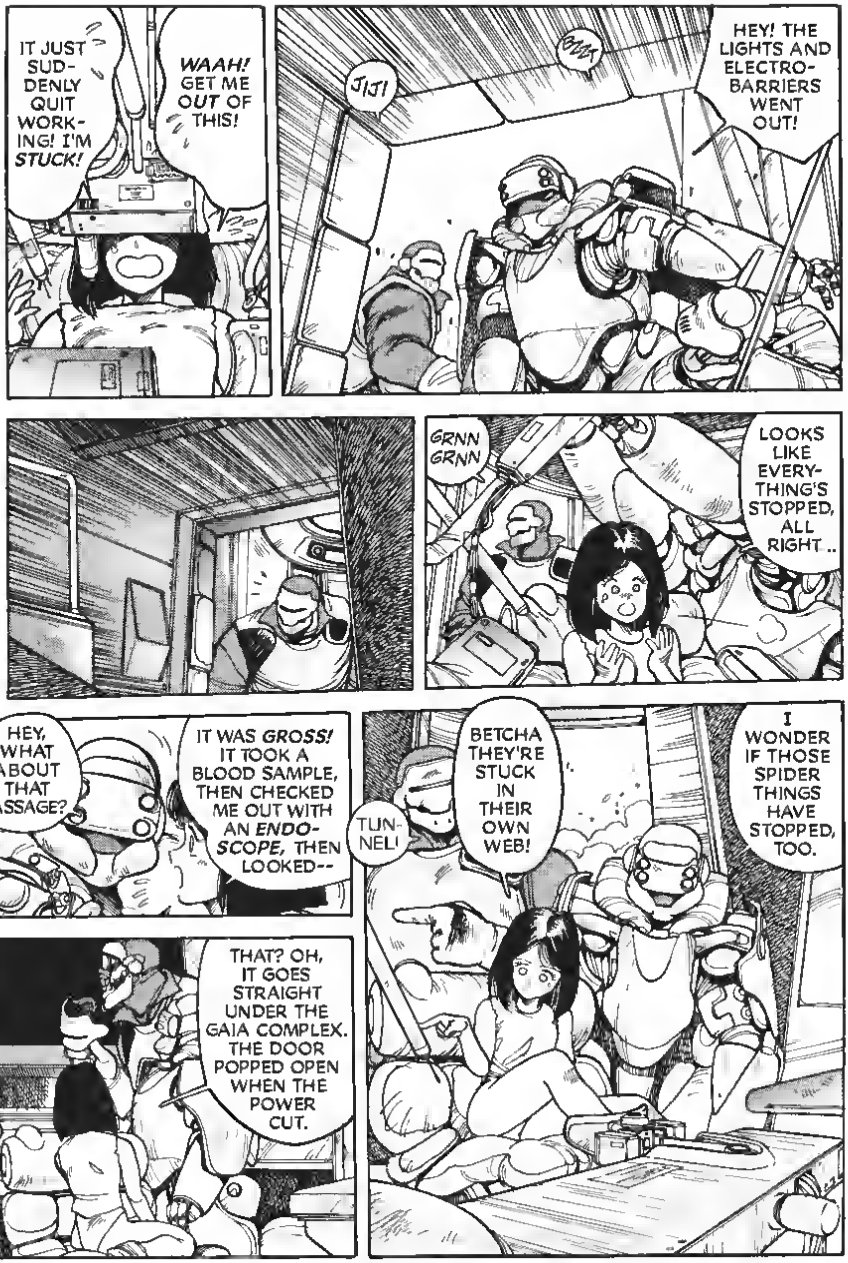
WAS THE COUNCIL PROPOSAL REALLY--
WHAT'S THIS I HEAR ABOUT US *BIO-ROIDS...?!*
DIRECTOR *ATHENA!*
TAKE A LOOK-- HERE'S THE SUMMARY OF THE LONG CONVERSATION THEY HAD ABOUT THE *HOPE* PLAN.
THEN WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK BETWEEN TARTARUS AND GAIA?
...IT DIDN'T REJECT *US,* NOT BIOROIDS OURSELVES.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. REMEMBER, GAIA REJECTED THE COUNCIL'S DATA *AND* THE PROPOSAL...
beep
YOU DON'T HAVE TO EXPLAIN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PENCIL AND THE FINGER THAT HOLDS IT TO *ME,* THANKS.
OF COURSE, NO COMPUTER CAN DO ANYTHING THE PROGRAMMERS DIDN'T INTEND IN THE FIRST PLACE, BUT--
...*"THIRD GENERATION BIOROIDS"?*
HMPH! HOPES VERSUS REALITIES, IS IT, GAIA? SOLVE THE PROBLEM WITH...
THE PROBLEM IS HOW WE DEAL WITH *STRESS*-- IS THIS UTOPIA WE HAVE NOW THE WAY THINGS *SHOULD* BE, OR JUST THE OPPOSITE?

AMAZING THIS PROBLEM NEVER SURFACED BEFORE..
IT MAY BE ONE WAY TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY, BUT IT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING A COMPUTER WOULD COME UP WITH ON ITS OWN...
WHAT'S THIS HERE?! "THIS DESIGN PHILOSOPHY WAS ADOPTED IN THIRD-GENERATION AND CERTAIN SELECTED BIOROID UNITS. THESE UNITS HAVE NOT ENCOUNTERED STRESS PROBLEMS..."?! IS IT TALKING ABOUT THE *COUNCIL*?

THEN IT MUST HAVE KNOWN THERE WERE ENOUGH VOTES IN THE LEGISLATURE TO PASS IT, TOO. NO--WAIT A MINUTE!
SO TARTARUS PREDICTED THE COUNCIL'S ACTIONS? AND EVEN THE KIND OF PLAN THEY WOULD COME UP WITH?

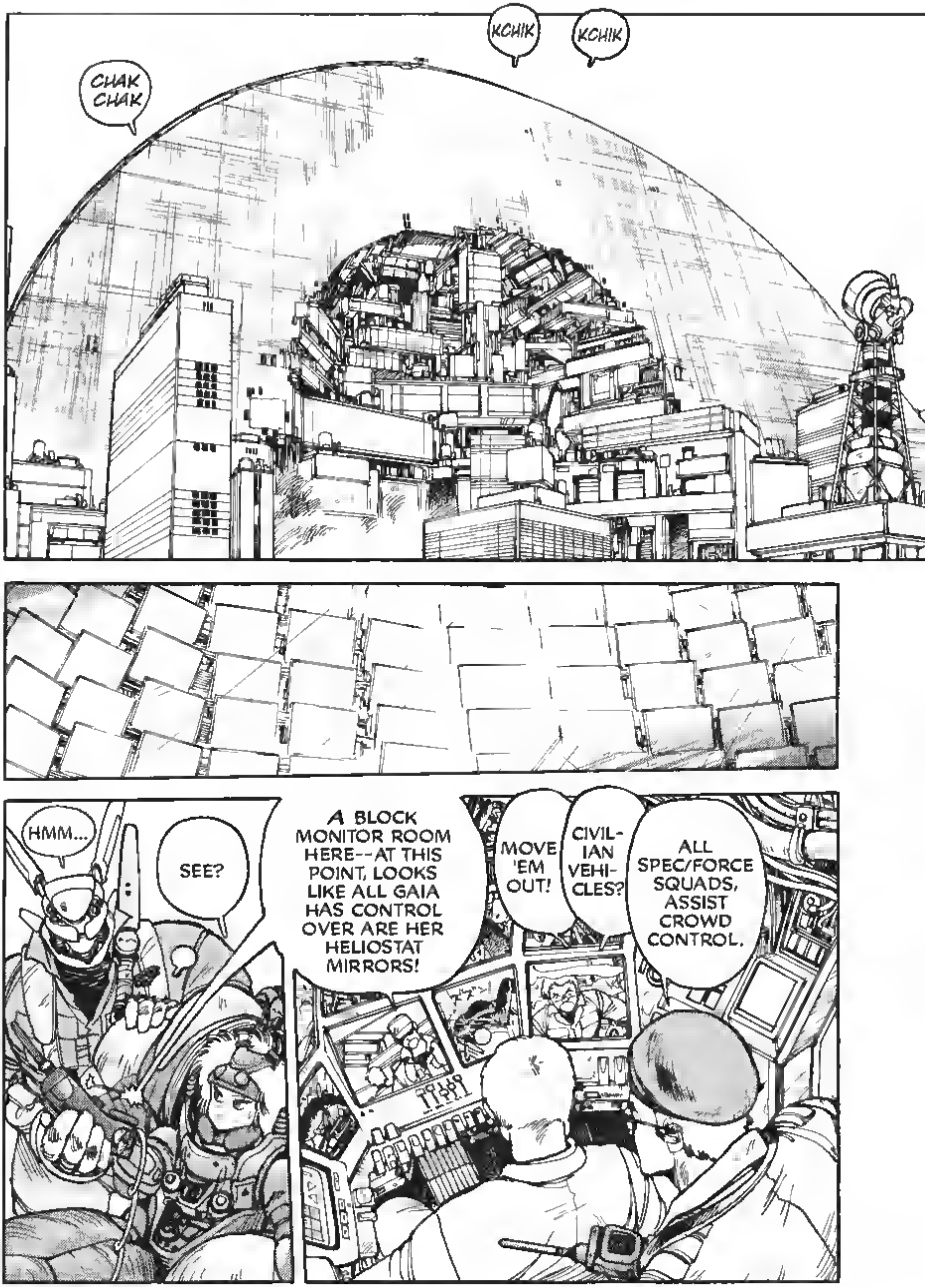
COULD THE PROBLEM PREDATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF OLYMPUS ITSELF...? BUT THEN IT COULDN'T BE A PROGRAMMER PLOT AFTER ALL!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE-- THE CITY PLANNING TEAM PROGRAMMERS COULDN'T HAVE STAGED THE WHOLE THING--THE SACRIFICES WERE TOO GREAT!

*CAN'T WE **EVER** RETURN TO EDEN?!*
HAVE WE REACHED OUR LIMITS? BOTH BIOROIDS AND HUMANS?


IT JUST SUDDENLY QUIT WORKING! I'M *STUCK!*
WAAH! GET ME *OUT* OF THIS!
JIJI
BIBI
HEY! THE LIGHTS AND ELECTRO-BARRIERS WENT OUT!
GRNN GRNN
LOOKS LIKE EVERYTHING'S STOPPED, ALL RIGHT..
HEY, WHAT ABOUT THAT PASSAGE?
IT WAS *GROSS!* IT TOOK A BLOOD SAMPLE, THEN CHECKED ME OUT WITH AN *ENDOSCOPE,* THEN LOOKED--
TUNNEL!
BETCHA THEY'RE STUCK IN THEIR OWN WEB!
I WONDER IF THOSE SPIDER THINGS HAVE STOPPED, TOO.
THAT? OH, IT GOES STRAIGHT UNDER THE GAIA COMPLEX. THE DOOR POPPED OPEN WHEN THE POWER CUT.

KTHINK
FX. WHAM
FX. WHOK
FX. KRAK
BIP
GIVE ME A DIRECT FEED TO THE COLONEL!
...BUT THE FIGHTING'S OVER, RIGHT, SIR?
WE WENT AHEAD AND USED HITOMI WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION... SORRY, SIR. HAVE THE PLATFORMS STOPPED YET? WHAT'S THAT..? YES, SIR. I UNDERSTAND...
DEUNAN KNUTE, SIR--THE NEW ONE IN SQUAD FOUR!
WHO'S THIS?

*FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
EXCUSE ME, COLONEL-- WE'VE BROUGHT DOWN THE FIFTH GUN PLATFORM. THEY'RE LOCKING UP THE WIRES ON NUMBER SIX RIGHT NOW.
....
RIGHT NOW, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN SAVED BY LADY LUCK.
LET'S JUST SAY THE POSSIBILITY SEEMS VERY HIGH. I'LL THINK OF HOW TO DEAL WITH YOU LATER, KNUTE!
*FX. ZUZUZUZUZUN
GODDAMN GAIA!!
JEEZ... LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO TARTARUS...!
WOW... IS IT REALLY OVER...?
POP!
GARA
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT!? GO PHONE YOUR FATHER!
NOT NOW, TOO MUCH CONGES-TION!
HEY MOM A GRAVITY WALL MADE TRAJECTORY GO WIDE!
*FX. HOMMMM
*FX. KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN
?
SURE IS BRIGHT!!
MUST BE REFLECTING OFF GAIA'S HELIO-STATS...

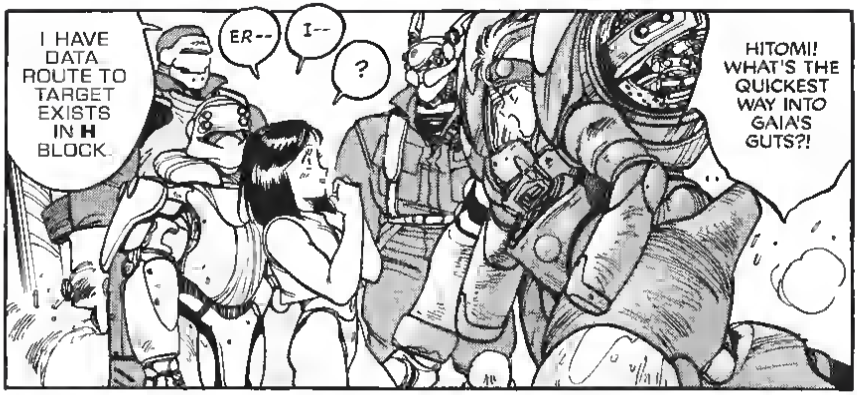

CHAK CHAK
KCHIK
KCHIK
HMM...
SEE?
A BLOCK MONITOR ROOM HERE--AT THIS POINT, LOOKS LIKE ALL GAIA HAS CONTROL OVER ARE HER HELIOSTAT MIRRORS!
MOVE 'EM OUT!
CIVILIAN VEHICLES?
ALL SPEC/FORCE SQUADS, ASSIST CROWD CONTROL.

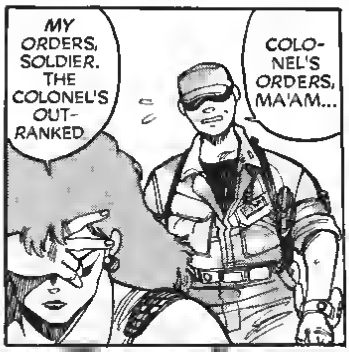
FX: WHKOOOM
*FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP
WHAT WAS?
I... I GUESS IT WAS ALL FOR THE BEST.
?
WELL...
WHAT WE DID... WHETHER IT WAS RIGHT OR WRONG.
BUT I WONDER IF WE HAD THE *RIGHT* TO DECIDE BY OUR-SELVES ..?
IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER ANY-MORE...
FX: ZUZUZUN!

FX: GISH
HOW SHOULD WE ACT? WHAT SHOULD OUR STANDARDS BE?
*KANG
HMPH
WHAT A THOUGHTFUL, BEAUTIFULLY MADE TOY! THAT DAMNED COMPUTER STRIPS THE PEOPLE WHO USE IT OF THEIR ABILITIES, THEN DEMANDS THEY GET THEM BACK AGAIN...
ROGER!
--ONLY ONE LEFT IS OVER BY GAIA!
IT'S JUST TOO DAMN HARD TO MAKE IT WORK, THIS CITY!
EVEN A PENCIL CAN KILL A MAN WITH ONE BLOW... IT ALL DEPENDS ON HOW YOU USE IT.
*FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
?!
COLONEL!
WHAT THE--?!
?!
*KOOM
FX: KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN

*FX: BROARRRR
*FX: KOOM KOOM
FX: WHOOM
FX: FRMMMMBLE
FX: WHKOCM
WHAT THE HELL?!
THE HEAT--!
FX: KSSHH
GUNK!
GUA-A!
POLICE
*FX: SSSSS

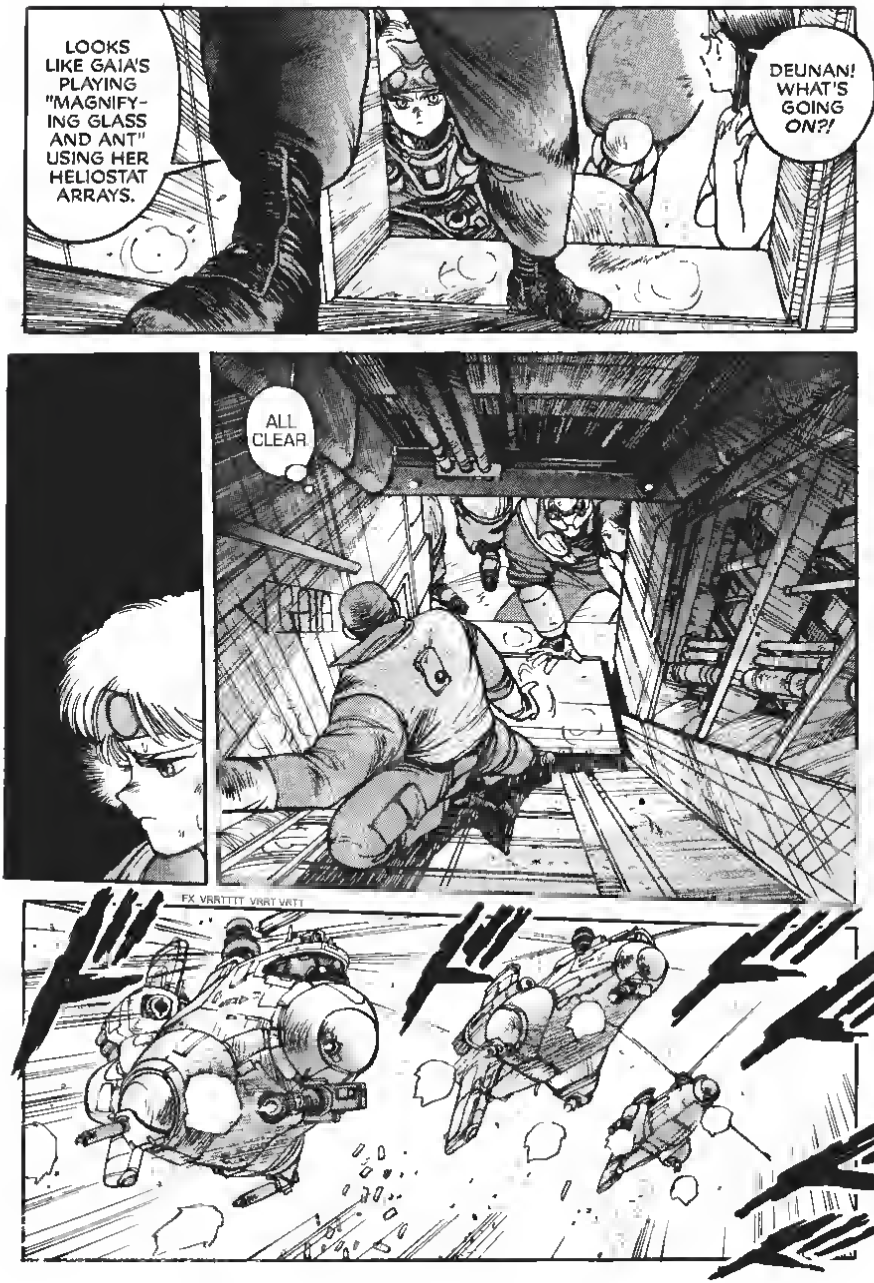
THERE! HEADING TOWARD THE NUKE PLANT!
*BOOM WHKOOM
C-COLONEL! LOOK! BEAMS OF LIGHT!
THROW A MAGNETIC NET AROUND THE NUKE PLANT! USE THAT OLD ONE FROM THE WAR!
SQUEEZE THE GAIA ACCESS CODES OUT OF THE COUNCIL!!
AND GET ME THE CENTRAL MONITOR ROOM!
NO, I...
NO, SIR . IT'S RIGHT BELOW US, MAYBE? USING THE CONFUSION--
*FX. WHF WHF WHF WHF
COULD IT BE THE LAST PLAT-FORM?
*FX. DASH
THE HELIO-STATS!!

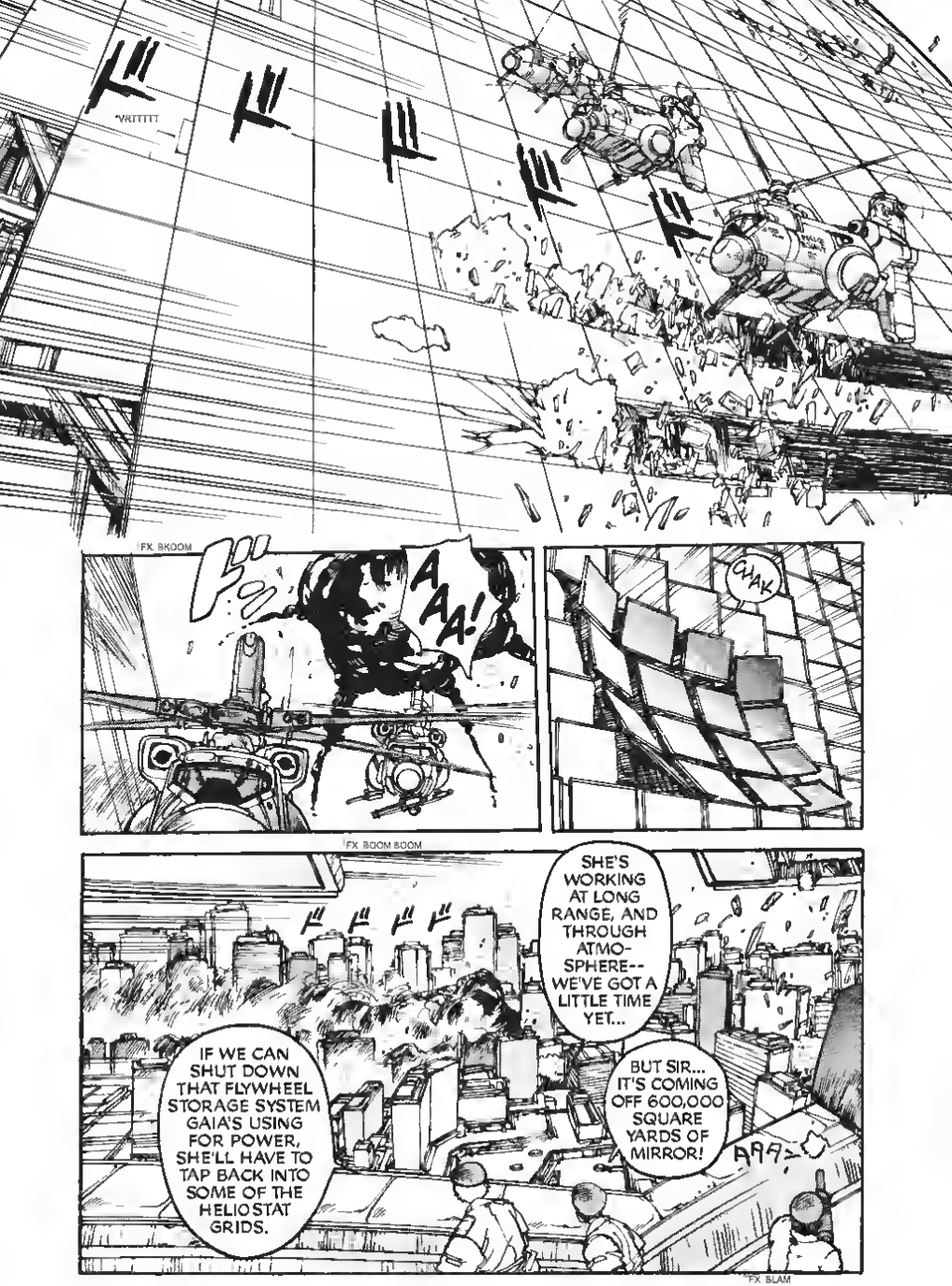

I HAVE DATA ROUTE TO TARGET EXISTS IN H BLOCK.
ER--
I--
?
HITOMI! WHAT'S THE QUICKEST WAY INTO GAIA'S GUTS?!


MY ORDERS, SOLDIER. THE COLONEL'S OUT-RANKED.
COLO-NEL'S ORDERS, MA'AM...

I'M STAYING HERE.
MA'AM... YOU SHOULD GO TO THE SHEL-TER--

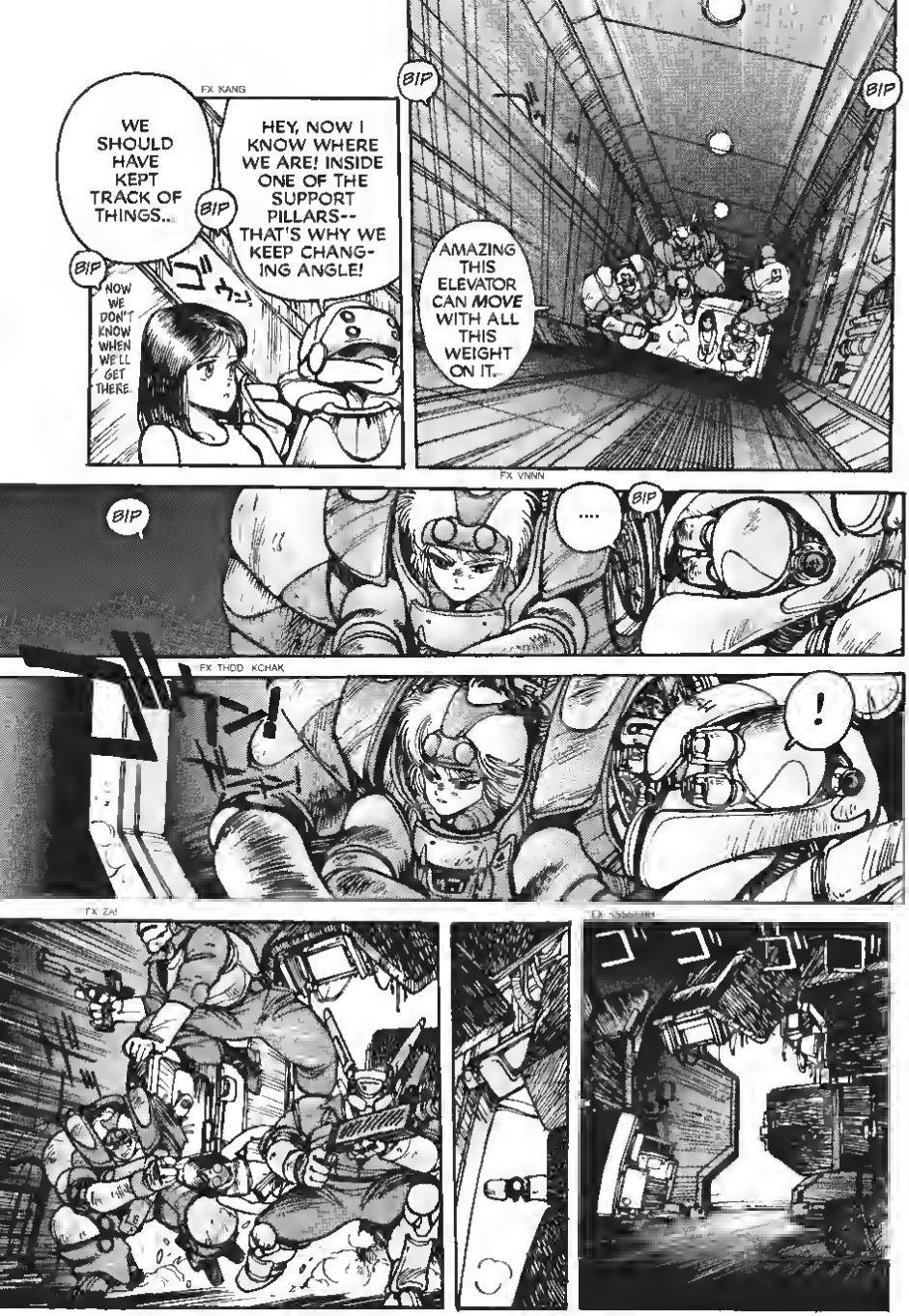
--ARGET THE MISSILE SALVOS HALFWAY DOWN THE HELIO ARRAY! TRY--
--CAN'T LAY A SMOKE SCREEN THEN BUST THE GODDAMN HELIOSTATS! USE THE--
--MUST EVACUATE ALL CIVILIANS TO SHELTERS ARMORED VEHICLES OR HELICOP--
.....
--INK! CAN'T WE USE ONE OF THE GUN PLAT-FORMS TO--

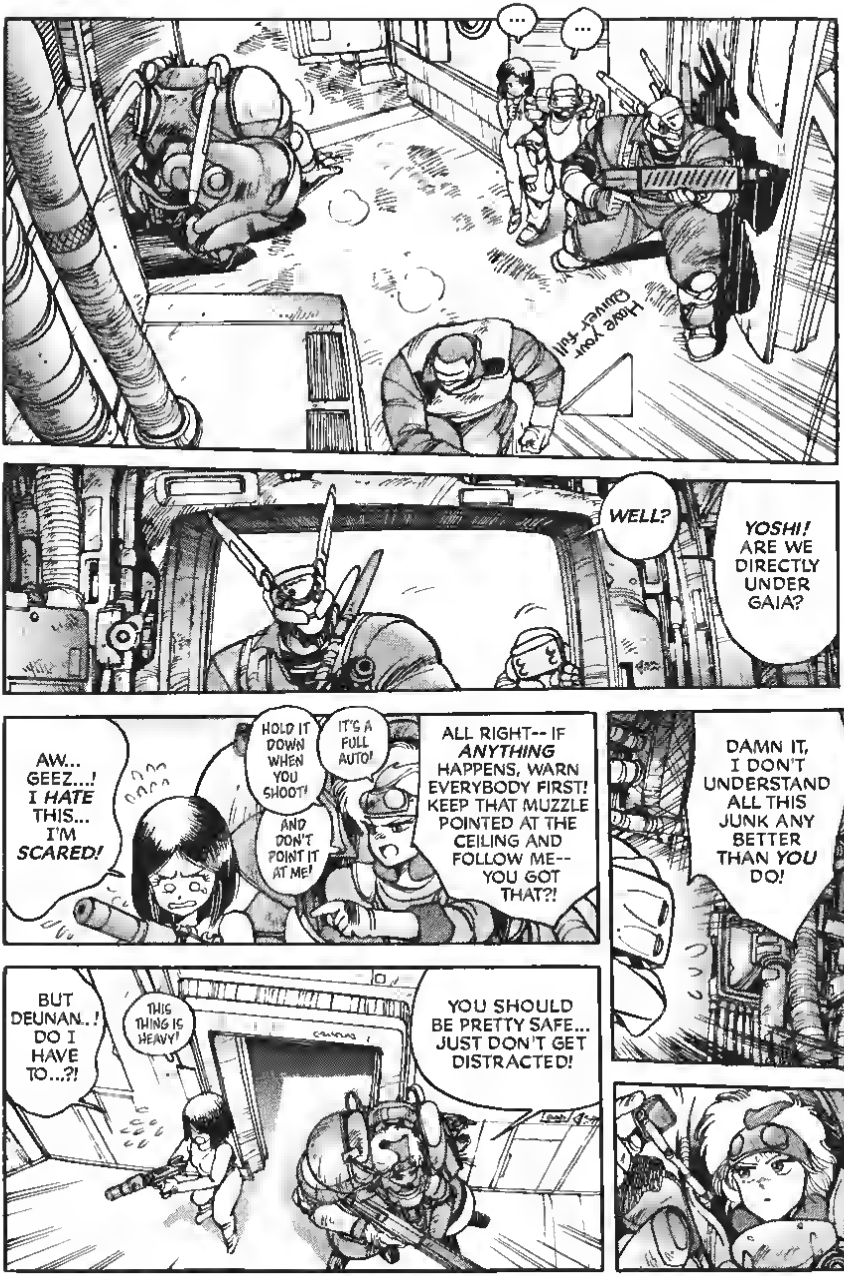

LOOKS LIKE GAIA'S PLAYING "MAGNIFY-ING GLASS AND ANT" USING HER HELIOSTAT ARRAYS.
DEUNAN! WHAT'S GOING ON?!
ALL CLEAR
FX VRRTTTT VRRT VRT!

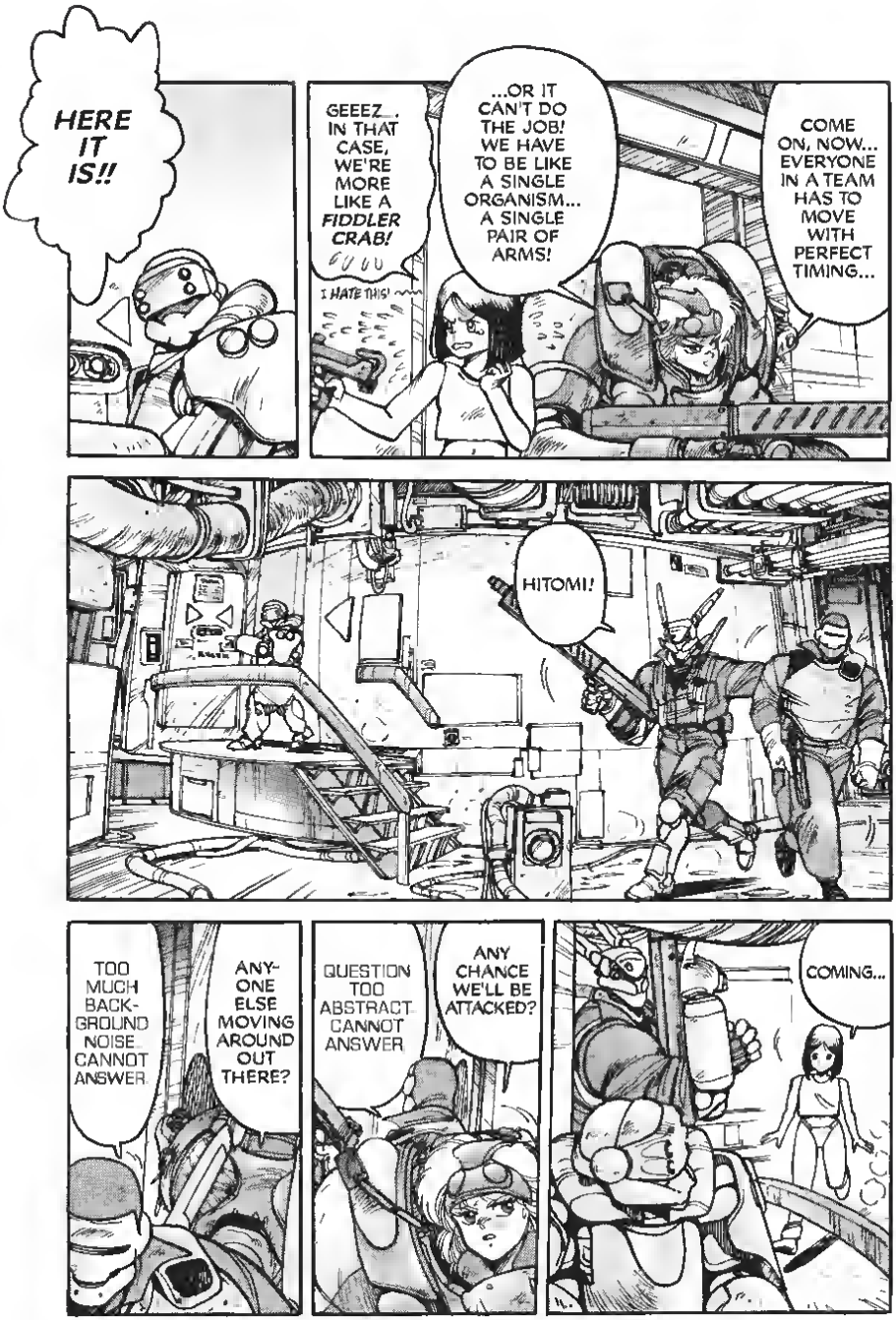

*VRITTTT
FX: BKOOM
AAA!
CHAK
FX: BOOM BOOM
IF WE CAN SHUT DOWN THAT FLYWHEEL STORAGE SYSTEM GAIA'S USING FOR POWER, SHE'LL HAVE TO TAP BACK INTO SOME OF THE HELIOSTAT GRIDS.
SHE'S WORKING AT LONG RANGE, AND THROUGH ATMO-SPHERE-- WE'VE GOT A LITTLE TIME YET...
BUT SIR... IT'S COMING OFF 600,000 SQUARE YARDS OF MIRROR!
AAA~
*FX: BLAM

HEY...!
COOLANT DELUGE SYSTEM ON STANDBY!
ALL SENSORS IN PLACE!
KANG
NO WAY! IT'S A TOKAMAK REACTOR!
THINK THERE'S ANY CHANCE OF EXPLOSION?
POWER IT UP!
SERGEANT LANCE! THE MAGNETIC NET'S FINISHED!
ESWAT
*SSSSS
...IT'S HIT THE POWER PLANT!!
WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO GET ONE OF THE GUN PLATFORMS UNDER OUR CONTROL!
SIR! ONE OF THE PLATFORMS IS HEADED THIS WAY!
YES, SIR!
YOU! LOAD THE COPTERS WITH SPINDLE OIL*, AND GET THE AEROBATIC FLYING TEAM FROM THE PARADE BACK INTO THE AIR!
SHE CAN ONLY MOVE HER MIRRORS SO FAR--THE FOCUS IS SLIGHTLY OFF! TELL THE COLONEL!
LORD, GIVE US CLOUDS!

*injected into aircraft engines to generate smoke for aerobatic performances


FX KANG
WE SHOULD HAVE KEPT TRACK OF THINGS..
BIP
HEY, NOW I KNOW WHERE WE ARE! INSIDE ONE OF THE SUPPORT PILLARS-- THAT'S WHY WE KEEP CHANG-ING ANGLE!
BIP
NOW WE DON'T KNOW WHEN WE'LL GET THERE.
ゴォン
BIP
BIP
AMAZING THIS ELEVATOR CAN MOVE WITH ALL THIS WEIGHT ON IT..
FX VNNN
BIP
....
BIP
FX THOD KCHAK
!
FX ZA!
FX


...
...
Have Your Guard Fall
WELL?
YOSHI! ARE WE DIRECTLY UNDER GAIA?
AW... GEEZ...! I HATE THIS... I'M SCARED!
HOLD IT DOWN WHEN YOU SHOOT!
IT'S A FULL AUTO!
AND DON'T POINT IT AT ME!
ALL RIGHT-- IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, WARN EVERYBODY FIRST! KEEP THAT MUZZLE POINTED AT THE CEILING AND FOLLOW ME-- YOU GOT THAT?!
DAMN IT, I DON'T UNDERSTAND ALL THIS JUNK ANY BETTER THAN YOU DO!
BUT DEUNAN..! DO I HAVE TO...?!
THIS THING IS HEAVY!
YOU SHOULD BE PRETTY SAFE... JUST DON'T GET DISTRACTED!


HERE IT IS!!
GEEEZ... IN THAT CASE, WE'RE MORE LIKE A FIDDLER CRAB!
I HATE THIS!
...OR IT CAN'T DO THE JOB! WE HAVE TO BE LIKE A SINGLE ORGANISM... A SINGLE PAIR OF ARMS!
COME ON, NOW... EVERYONE IN A TEAM HAS TO MOVE WITH PERFECT TIMING...
HITOMI!
TOO MUCH BACK-GROUND NOISE. CANNOT ANSWER.
ANY-ONE ELSE MOVING AROUND OUT THERE?
QUESTION TOO ABSTRACT. CANNOT ANSWER.
ANY CHANCE WE'LL BE ATTACKED?
COMING...

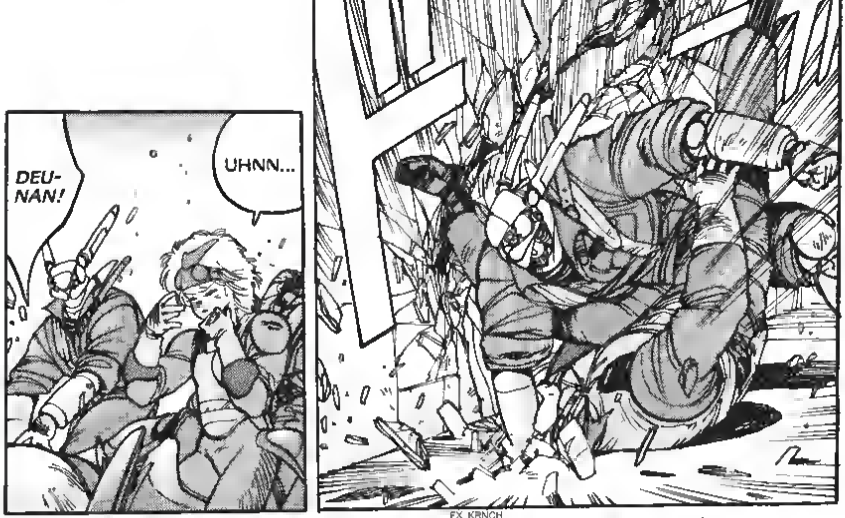
FX KSSSHHH
KCHAK
ゴウン!
KSSSHHH
DID IT!
FX WHSST
beep
CAMOU-FLAGE TOO EFFECTIVE CANNOT ANSWER
ANY MONITOR SYSTEMS? GAS NOZZLES? LASER TRIGGERS?
FX KSSSHHH
IS THIS IT?!

VNNN!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS. BUT WOW!
THE VARIABLES KEEP CHANGING, BUT THE COUNT-DOWN'S STILL RUNNING!
HEY! GAIA'S SHOWING US HOW MANY HELIOSTATS ARE IN USE, EFFECTIVENESS PROJECTIONS... AND A COUNT-DOWN TO THE EXPLOSION!!
?!

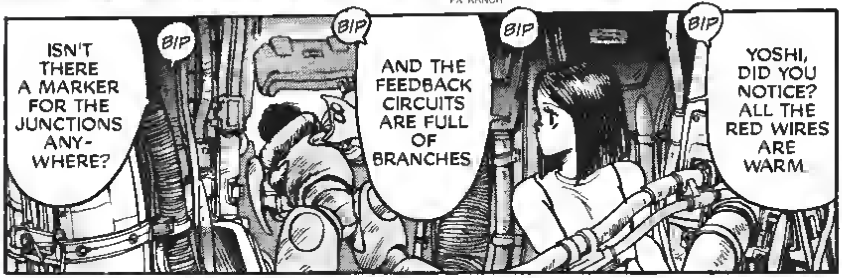
NO TALK DURING OPS STU-PID!
"GAIA HAS NO DESIRES. GAIA HAS ONLY CONCLU-SIONS."
GAIA SAYS "FACTORING IN VARIATIONS IN INCLINATION, EDUCATIONAL BIAS, ETCETERA, GAIA DISCUSSES DATA AMONG INDIVIDUAL COMPUTER UNITS. CONCLUSIONS EQUAL PROPOSALS."
DEU-NAN!
DOES GAIA *ALWAYS* PROVIDE SUCH HELPFUL INFORMA-TION?
OKAY... ALL CLEAR. WE'LL TAKE THE NEXT DOOR.
...OR IS IT ACTUALLY *YOU* WE SHOULD BE WORRIED ABOUT, GAIA?
BUT RELYING ON MACHINES AND LOGIC *ALONE* HAS ITS FAULTS, TOO. IS IT REALLY *BIOROIDS* WHO ARE DANGER-OUS...
ARUGESS SAID THERE'S A THIRD ROAD, BUT I DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHAT IT MIGHT BE--
BUT IF WE *DON'T*, WE'LL BE BACK TO THE PRE-WAR DAYS AGAIN.
IF WE STOP GAIA NOW THERE'LL BE NO MORE CHECKS AND BALANCES ON THE BIOROIDS...

*SKAM
*FX. SKRASH
NOOO!
*FX. BEEP BOOP
FX. WRACK WRACK
*FX. RIP RIP R.P.
HNN!
KYAA!
*FX. WRENCHG

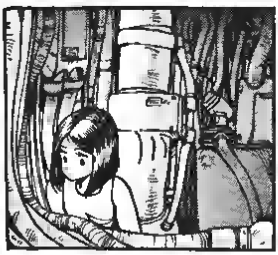
*ZAI
*BLAM BLAM BLAM
BIP
BIP
?
BIP
BI
*FX: SPAK
*FX: KANGG
*SPRAKKK
KRAK
KRAKSH



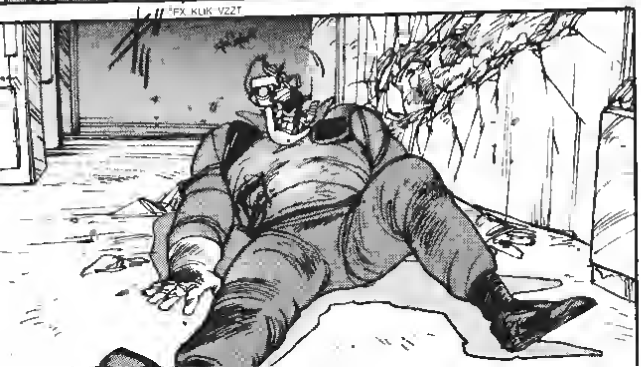
FX KRNCH

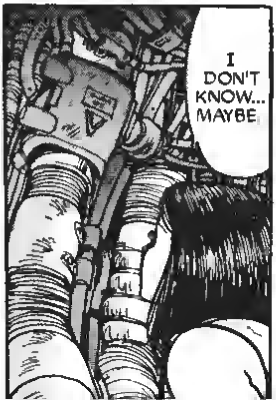

ISN'T THERE A MARKER FOR THE JUNCTIONS ANY-WHERE?
BIP
BIP
AND THE FEEDBACK CIRCUITS ARE FULL OF BRANCHES
BIP
BIP
YOSHI, DID YOU NOTICE? ALL THE RED WIRES ARE WARM.

FX KLIK



FX KLIK VZZT



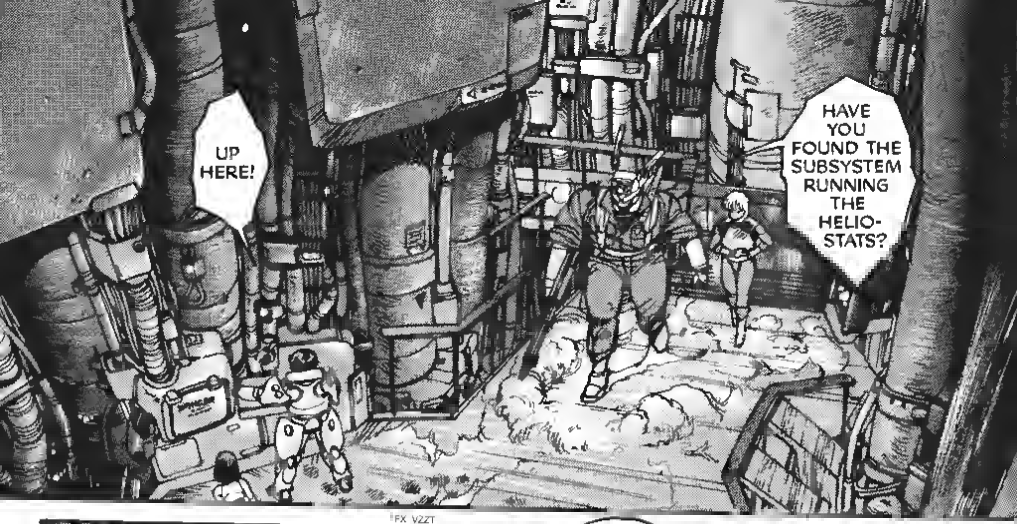


DEUNAN! LISTEN TO ME!!
I CAN'T STAND IT! WE'RE JUST KILLERS!!
WHERE ARE WE? THIS ISN'T A SWAT ASSAULT!!
HOW... HOW DID WE GET ALL THIS TRAINING? ARE WE STILL IN BADSIDE?
THIS MAY BE OUR ONLY CHANCE TO SHOW THAT WE CONTROL OUR DESTINY, NOT HER!
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, GAIA CAN BE A WEAPON AGAINST US! SHE TAKES NO SIDES, SO SHE CAN SERVE ANYBODY!
GAIA ISN'T THE PROBLEM... SHE PROTECTS EVERY-THING HUMAN-- THE BAD ALONG WITH THE GOOD!* OUR REAL ENEMY IS THE PRESSURE THAT DRIVE US TO BAD DECISIONS AND KEEPS US FROM USING HER CORRECTLY!
AND IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE JUDGMENT OF THE POINT MAN! YOUR JUDGMENT!!
FX: G.SHI G.SHI
THERE'S NEVER BEEN A MORE IMPORTANT SWAT ASSAULT!
*FX: WHAM

*From Gaia's perspective Deunan and crew are terrorists so under Olympian law (no civil liberties for terrorists) they don't fall into a protected category

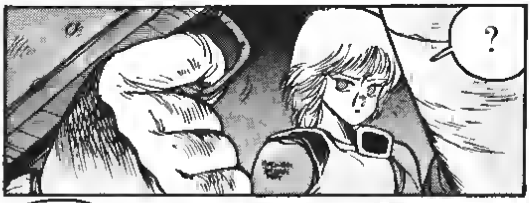
WHSSSH
!SPRAK
!FX KANG
!HEAVE
HRRN...
!FX HRRN
DR. ASIMOV MUST BE ROLLING OVER IN HIS GRAVE...!
FX WHOO

*BKOOM
!
PHEW!
FX: SKRASSH
YEAH...
HEY, WATCH IT!
CHAK
KR?N
TIME FOR THE BIG FINISH!
GUESS WE DON'T NEED ANY MORE FIRE SUPPORT, DO WE? TIME TO TRANSFER TO THE BOMB SQUAD!
WELL, THEN!
ARE YOU LISTENING, GAIA?
TRYING TO PROTECT THE CLOUDS FROM THE WINDS OF CHANGE, KOTUS? IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY ARMY, AND IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU, TOO.
*SSS
PYUU PYUU

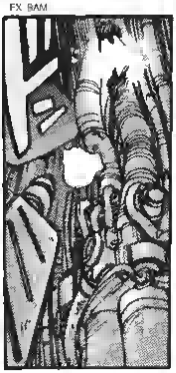


FX: VZZT

IT'S THE 48th CABLE OVER, COUNTING FROM THE RIGHT..
CHAK
CAN'T SEE IT THAT WELL. DAMN. LOOK, WE'LL DO THIS SYNCHRO-- YOU "LOOK" AT THE TARGET ALONG WITH ME.
EEK!

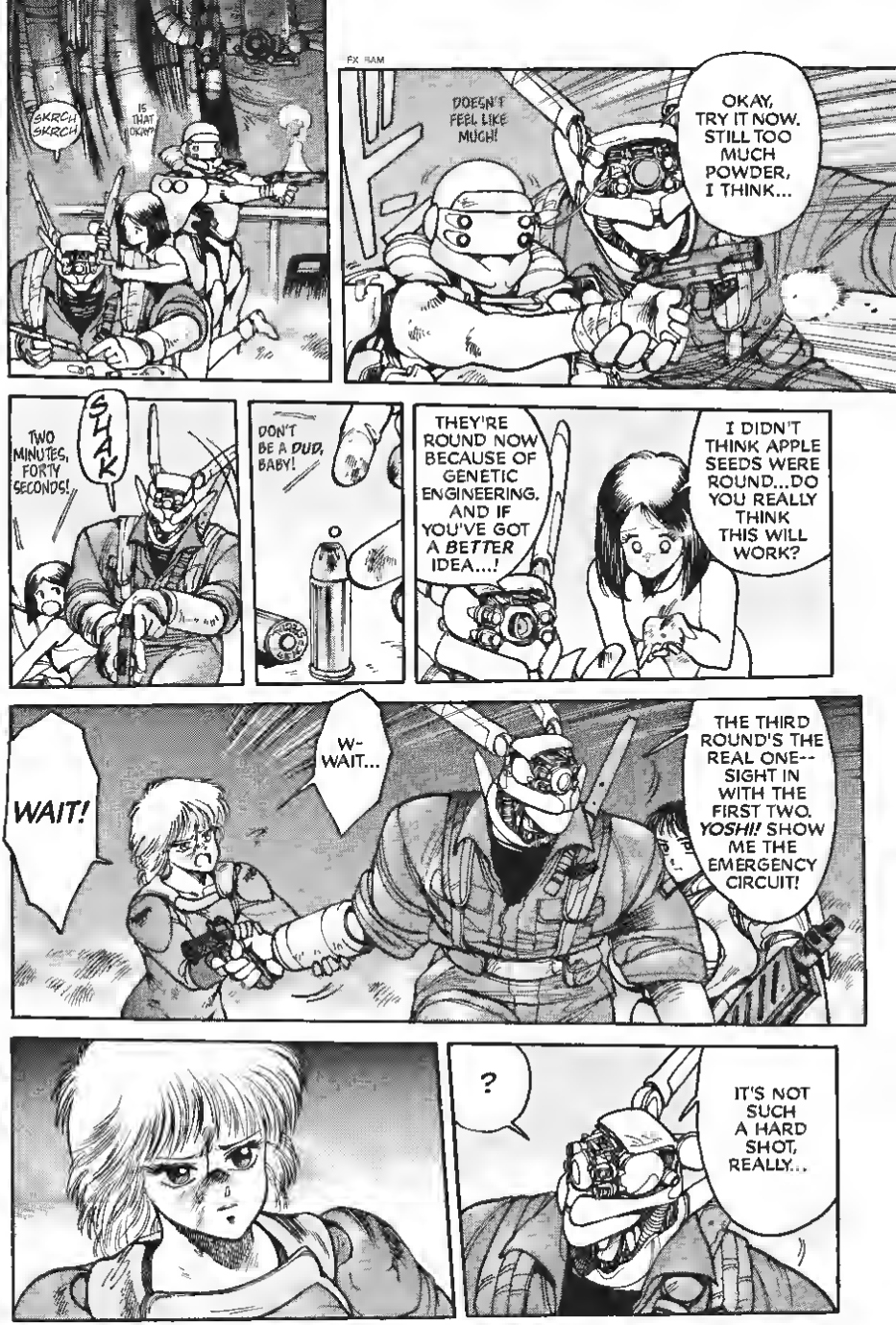


FX: BAM



KRAK
BEFORE THAT, WE BETTER CHECK BEHIND THIS PANEL HERE. COULD YOU--
DANGER!
NO ACCESS ON PAIN OF DEATH
BUT *WHAT?* SHOOT THEM. *NOW!*
JUST *WAIT!*
THE REGULAR HELIOSTAT CONTROL LINE AND THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT GAIA'S NOW USING BOTH RUN OVER THERE, BUT--
FX KANGG
AND?
EEK!
AND ONE OF THEM'S ALREADY LOCKED IN...
DAMN IT--I *THOUGHT* SO! MORE BACKUP CIRCUITS!
IF WE JUST SMASH IT, I THINK THAT WOULD CAUSE GAIA TO LOCK THE HELIOSTATS INTO PLACE VIA THE EMERGENCY BYPASS AND JUST SHUT DOWN THE CIRCUIT HERE. SHE'D GIVE THE NEW ROUTINGS PRIORITY OVER THE REGULAR CIRCUITS, SEE?
HOLD IT...
DO WE HAVE TO BUST THAT MIDDLE ONE BEFORE TAKING OUT THE EMER-GENCY CIRCUIT?

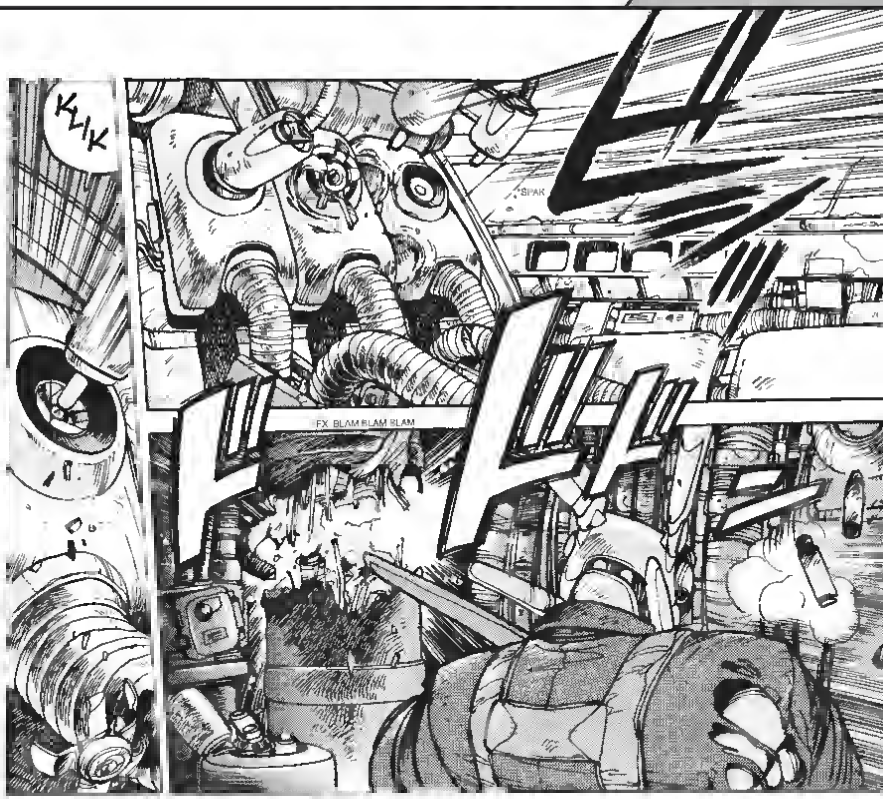
YOSHI! WE'VE ONLY GOT FOUR MINUTES AND TWENTY-THREE SECONDS LEFT! HURRY!
I THINK WE CAN ASSUME THE HELIOSTATS NORMALLY FUNCTION AUTOMATICALLY AND INVOLUNTARILY, LIKE HUMAN ORGANS.
NO KIDDING
SO...WE WANT TO KEEP THE BACK-UP CIRCUIT FROM KICKING IN WITHOUT ACTUALLY BREAKING IT, AND THEN CUT THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT? THAT'S A PAIN...
IT'S SUPER-COOLED TO 450° BELOW--IT'LL FREEZE THE SKIN RIGHT OFF YOU!
IDIOT! GET OUT OF THERE!
GEE... WHY DON'T I JUST CRAWL IN AND STUFF SOMETHING INTO IT?
SIXTEEN FEET IN FROM THE HATCH, HUH? THAT'S A TOUGH ONE...
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?
WE'RE GOING TO PLUG THE BACKUP CIRCUIT CONNECTOR HOLE.
HMM!
HITOMI, THERE SHOULD BE AN APPLE IN MY JACKET POCKET--DIG OUT A COUPLE OF SEEDS.
BUT... BUT BRIAREOS...
DEUNAN... GIVE ME SOME HOLLOW-POINT ROUNDS.
COULD YOU MANUALLY ADJUST MY MAIN LENS? IT HASN'T WORKED RIGHT SINCE THE FIGHT. THANKS
NO... I'M GOING TO TAKE OUT MOST OF THE POWDER--LEAVE JUST ENOUGH SO THE BULLET CAN CLEAR THE BARREL.
HMM... THESE ARE MAG-NUMS...
WITH A BULLET?! YOU'LL JUST SMASH IT TO BITS!

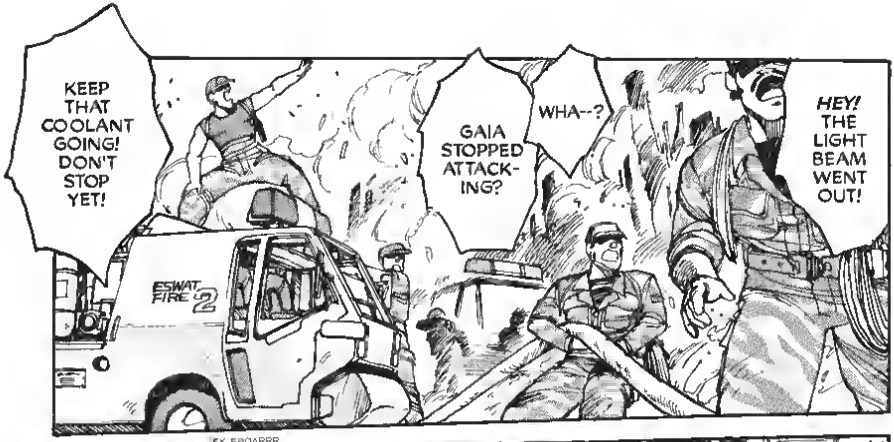

SKRCH SKRCH
IS THAT OKAY?
FX: RAM
DOESN'T FEEL LIKE MUCH!
OKAY, TRY IT NOW. STILL TOO MUCH POWDER, I THINK...
TWO MINUTES, FORTY SECONDS!
SHAK
DON'T BE A DUD, BABY!
THEY'RE ROUND NOW BECAUSE OF GENETIC ENGINEERING. AND IF YOU'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA...!
I DIDN'T THINK APPLE SEEDS WERE ROUND...DO YOU REALLY THINK THIS WILL WORK?
WAIT!
W-WAIT...
THE THIRD ROUND'S THE REAL ONE--SIGHT IN WITH THE FIRST TWO. YOSHI! SHOW ME THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT!
?
IT'S NOT SUCH A HARD SHOT, REALLY...

IS GAIA REALLY WRONG?!
BRIAREOS! SHOULD WE *REALLY* BE DOING THIS?
A SHOT THAT CHANGES HISTORY... THERE'S BEEN A FEW. MAYBE THIS IS ONE OF THEM...
IF IT WAS MY CHOICE, I'D PULL THE TRIGGER.
I HAVE TO SHOOT OUT THE EMERGENCY CIRCUIT BEFORE I LOSE CONTROL OF MY FINGERS--*YOU* CAN'T FIRE MY 20mm, AND YOUR *COLT* IS TOO SMALL FOR MY HAND.
Quick!
DON'T DEPEND ON ME, DEUNAN.
STAY WITH ME!

WHAT SHOULD I DO?
DANGER
FIFTY SECONDS!
DEUNAN! THE TIME!
*FX: TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK
*FX: TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK
A PERFECTLY CON-STRUCTED TOY...
A UTOPIA DESIGNED FOR THE UTOPIAN SELF...
THEY'RE NOT IN BALANCE, THOSE GIANT SCALES...
FOR WHOM?
TO WHAT END...?
ANY-MORE....I DON'T..
TKTKTKTKTKTKTKTKTKTKTKTK

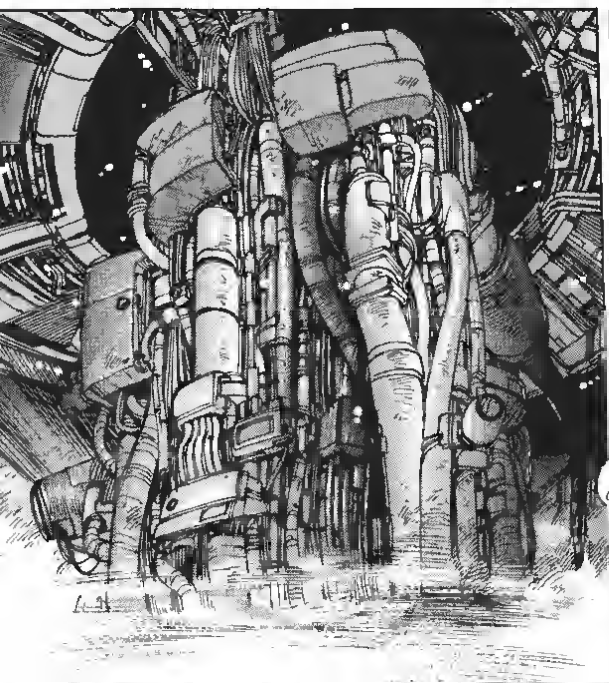
DASH
HURRY U--
EEEK!
FX BAM BAM
FX BAM
FX SPAK SPAK

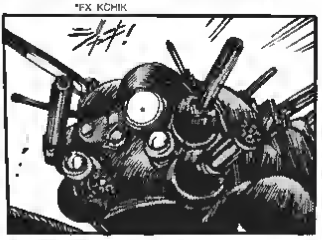

KLIK
FX: BLAM BLAM BLAM
AAA!
FX: PEEEEP
GAME OVER
FX: KZZT KZZT
...
...



FX: BROARRR

*FX: KCHIK

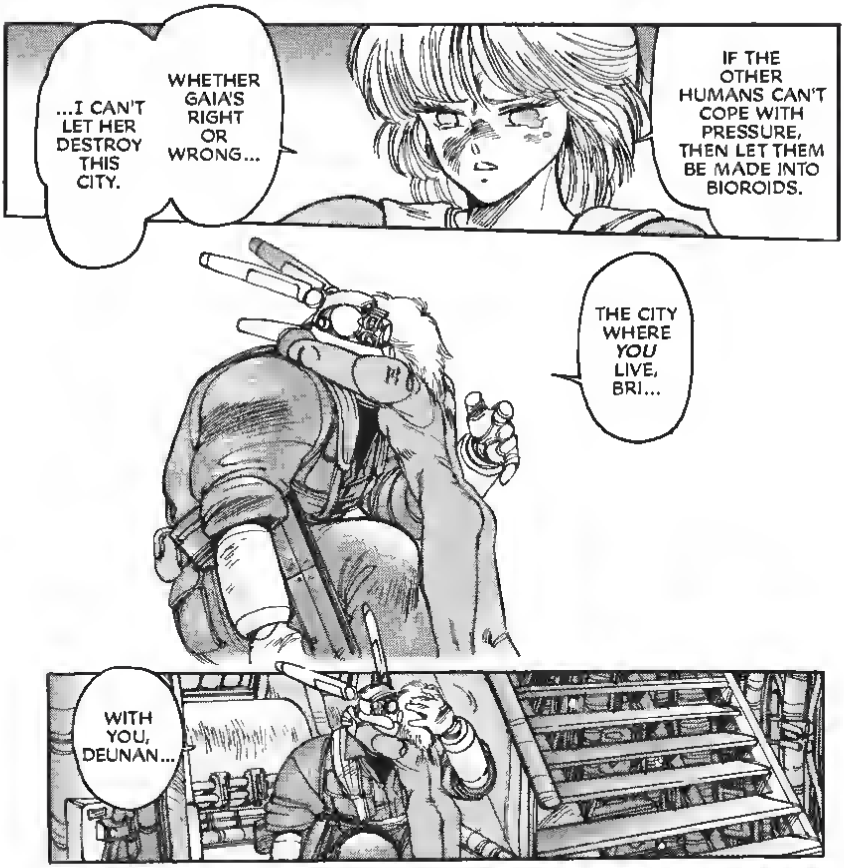


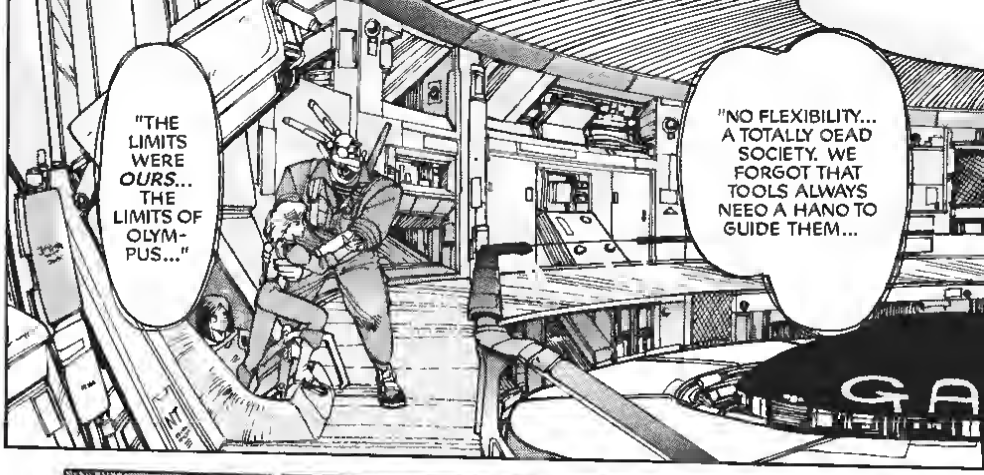


FX: BWHOOOM

FX: ZOZOZOZO

FX BEEEEP
LOOKS LIKE THAT WORKED THE WAY WE HOPED.
WE DID IT!
?!
THE BIOROIDS BEAT THE MACHINES!
WE DID IT. WE DID IT!
I SPENT ALL MY TIME WORRYING ABOUT THE SCALES IN FRONT OF ME--I NEVER NOTICED THEY WERE SITTING IN THE TRAY OF AN EVEN *BIGGER* SET OF SCALES...
THERE WASN'T ANY-THING TO BE CON-FUSED ABOUT.
I'M SO SORRY...
I'M SORRY...


IF THE OTHER HUMANS CAN'T COPE WITH PRESSURE, THEN LET THEM BE MADE INTO BIOROIDS.
WHETHER GAIA'S RIGHT OR WRONG...
...I CAN'T LET HER DESTROY THIS CITY.
THE CITY WHERE *YOU* LIVE, BRI...
WITH YOU, DEUNAN...
HMM...
THE FIRST STIRRINGS OF A NEW INDIVIDUALISM?
SO IT SEEMS THAT THE PROBLEM WASN'T HUMAN NATURE AFTER ALL. THE PLANS FOR OLYMPUS *ITSELF* WERE TOO OPTIMISTIC.
RELIGION, PHILOSOPHY, CUSTOMS, IDEOLOGY, ETHNICITY... IN OUR HASTE TO BRING THEM ALL TOGETHER, WE PILED UP TOO MANY COMPROMISES, TOO MANY MACHINES.
BIP


"THE LIMITS WERE OURS... THE LIMITS OF OLYM-PUS..."
"NO FLEXIBILITY... A TOTALLY DEAD SOCIETY. WE FORGOT THAT TOOLS ALWAYS NEED A HAND TO GUIDE THEM...

beep

...OLYM-PUS WILL BE NOTHING BUT ANOTHER PAWN IN THE GAME
AND NOW, WITH THE COUNCIL'S HOPE PLAN...

THE COUNCIL'S PROPOSAL WILL PASS AT THE NEXT SESSION OF THE LEGIS-LATURE?! ARE YOU SURE?
DON'T WORRY-- I'LL FORCE A RIDER FOR THE PRESERVA-TION OF ORIGINAL SPECIES
?
FX TAK TAK TAK TAK

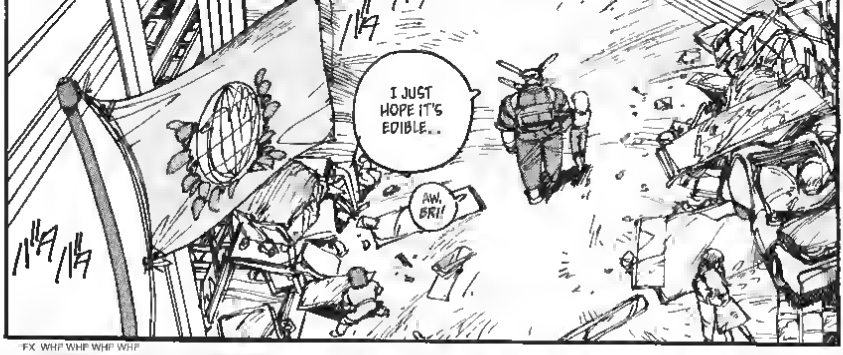
GRIA
BLOCK HUNTER
PING

FX VNN
I'M GOING TO MEET THE COUNCIL!
GET ME A HELI-COPTER!
HA?!

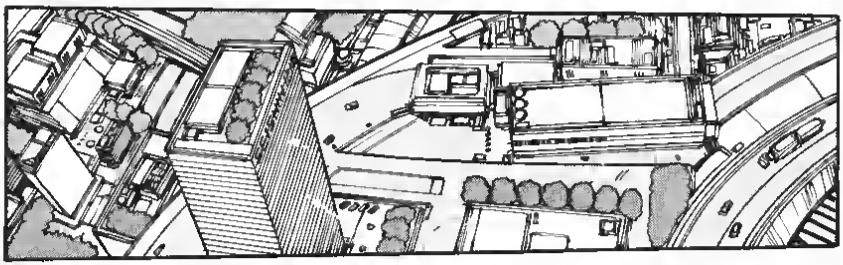
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
IN ANY CASE, THE COUNCIL CAN DO AS THEY PLEASE... JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO, GAIA GAVE ME THE NEXT NAME IN THE REGISTER OF KEYWORD HOLDERS WITH THEM, I CAN TRIGGER THE NEXT STAGE OF GAIA'S DEVELOPMENT.
STILL, USING NEITHER IS THE BEST SOLUTION OF ALL.
EVEN THE BEST MEDICINE CAN BE POISONOUS IF YOU TAKE TOO MUCH. AND POISON IN THE RIGHT QUANTITIES OFTEN MAKES GOOD MEDICINE.
IT WON'T BE A "FINAL SOLUTION."
FX: KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN KYUN
HMM?
...AND NOW THE KEYWORD REGISTER. THE PIECES ARE FINALLY COMING TOGETHER-- I CAN SEE IT NOW.
COLLECTING GUINEA PIGS, PUTTING LANDMATES ON SALE, THE HOPE PLAN...
FX: WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
THIS WILL BE THE AGE WHEN "HOMO SAPIENS" TAKES ON ITS TRUE MEANING... "MAN OF WISDOM!"
THE AGE OF THE BIO-ROIDS...

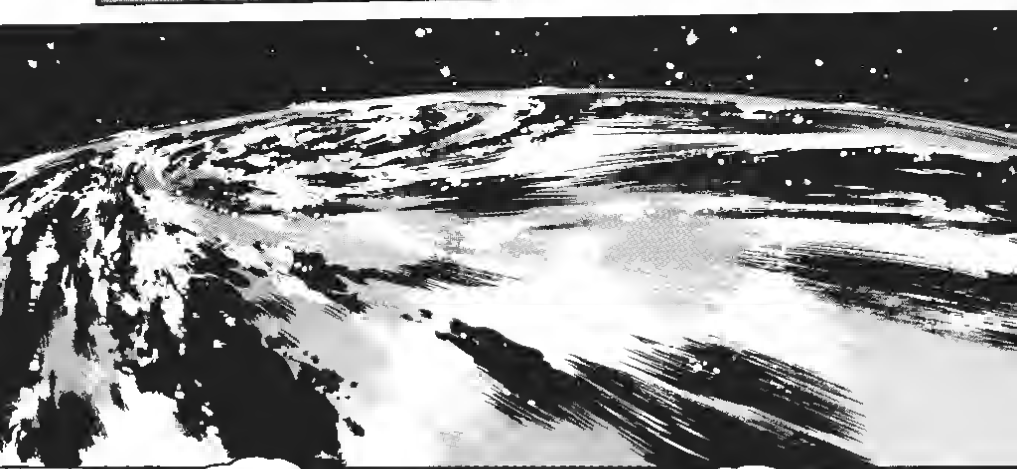
HMM?
SAY, BRI...
I DUNNO... MAYBE GO BACK INTO THAT JAIL?
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
SOUNDS FINE TO ME.
WANT TO GO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT THIS CITY WITH ME?
I THINK I'M GOING TO TAKE A LOOONG VACA-TION.
KNOW WHAT..?
C'MON, NOW-- DON'T GET CAR-RIED AWAY.
IDIOT..
THE WORLD LOOKS SO SMALL FROM UP HERE...

I'LL EVEN COOK DINNER FOR YOU!
ALL CITIZENS ARE REQUESTED TO RECORD THE DAMAGE IN THEIR AREA ON VIDEO.
WELL, I'LL HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THAT...WILL I ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO TELL WHAT IT IS BY *TASTE* INSTEAD OF NAME?
Hmph!
COULDN'T YOU AT LEAST *TRY* TO SOUND PLEASED?! JUST FOR *APPEAR-ANCES'* SAKE?!
*FX. WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP WHP
FX. WEEEOOOO
S.W.A.T
COME ON... GOOD COMPANY MAKES THE BEST SPICE!
AS YOU'RE IN THE WRECKAGE ALREADY UMMM
Hmph
HRMM... IS IT *REALLY* GOING TO TASTE GOOD THIS TIME?
*FX. MMMMM
LET'S GO!
OKAY, I'LL GO FOR THAT!

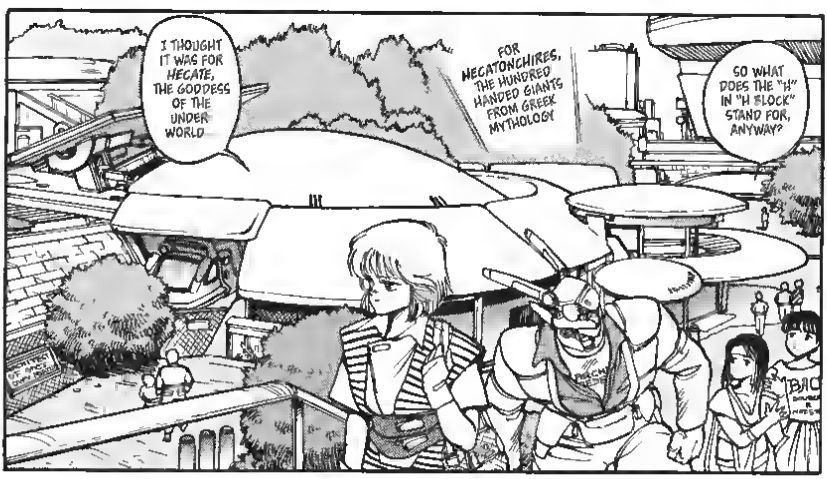


FX: WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP



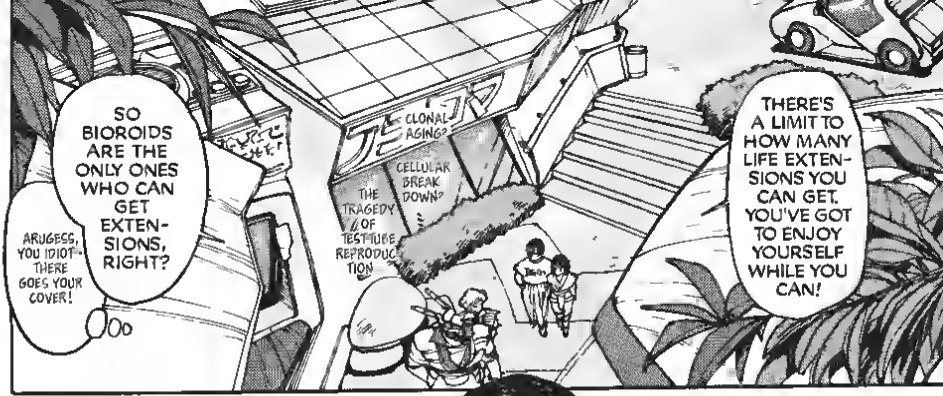


THIS IS ALL *YOUR* FAULT FOR SMASHING KOTUS' VIDEO-RECORDER UNIT!
*GRRRR
AARGH! THE ROUNDS I FIRED AND THE ROUNDS I'M SHORT DON'T ADD UP!
FX: TAKKA TAKKA TAKKA TAKKA TAK TAK TAKKA TAKKA

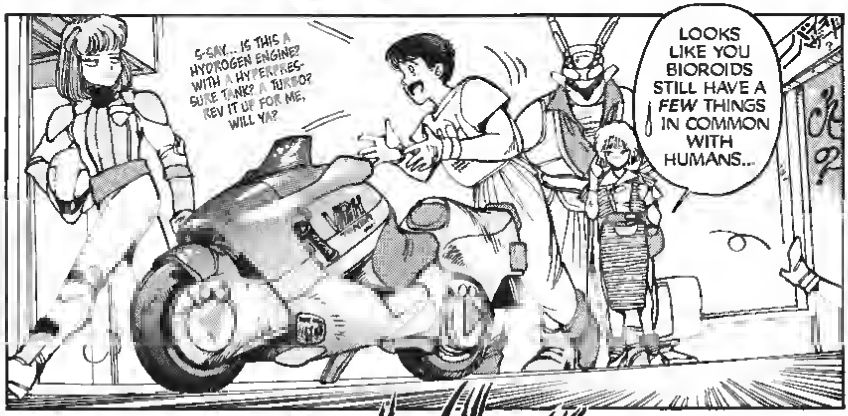

I THOUGHT IT WAS FOR HECATE, THE GODDESS OF THE UNDERWORLD
FOR HECATONCHIRES, THE HUNDRED HANDED GIANTS FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY
SO WHAT DOES THE "H" IN "H BLOCK" STAND FOR, ANYWAY?

LOOK! A GUN SHOP FOR POLICEMEN! LET'S CHECK IT OUT AND GET THE SALES-MEN ALL EXCITED...!
G-I ORINGE
LOOP HOLE
HEY, WHAT A GREAT BACK ALLEY!
THAT'S NOT FOR SALE.
DON'T BE A CHEAP-SKATE!
WHAT ABOUT YOUR GUGES BILL?
I'VE GOT TO GET IT!!
BRIAREOS! THEY'VE GOT A CUSTOM STEYR GB LIKE THE ONE MY DAD USED IN THAT CRIME PREVENTION POSTER!
GET A LOAD OF THESE AN-TIQUES!
THESE LAPIS LAZULI STONES WARD OFF EVIL SPIRITS, THEY DO... AND THEY LOOK GOOD ON YOU, AYE...
NECK-LACES?
WOW! GREAT!
FOR THESE! FOR THESE!
OH, YEAH? WHAT KIND OF SHOP IS THIS, THEN?
JINGLE
THAT'S NOT FOR SALE.
PACH MAYR, HUH ? GREAT CHECKER ING...
I WONDER IF I SHOULD SWITCH TO A RUBBER GRIP...

YOU'D BEST WATCH OUT-- IF THEY PERMITTED CROSSBREEDING WITH BIOROIDS, THEIR LITTLE LAW'D BE *WORTHLESS!*
FOOL!
DISCRIMI-NATION! DISCRIMI-NATION! *WAAAH!*
LOOKS LIKE SEX DISCRIMI-NATION TO ME!
ALL RIGHT!! MY LUCKY DAY! I'M COVERED BY THE NEW ORIGINAL SPECIES ACT--I'M NOT ELIGIBLE FOR A LIFE EXTENSION!
THE REAL THING! INCREDIBLE!
...BUT I'LL ONLY SELL THEM TO YOU IF YOU SWEAR TO NEVER GET A LIFE EXTENSION TREAT-MENT!
IT'S YOUR *SPIRIT* I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT, NOT YOUR *BODY!*
ANYWAY, WHEN IT'S TIME, I'M GOING TO HAVE A CLONE MADE.
NO FAIR...
HEH, HEH, HEH...
ANOTHER DAY, YOUNG LADY!
HEY, WHAT'VE I TOLD YOU ABOUT BOTHERIN' MY CUSTOMERS, GRANNY?!
YOSHI CAN'T THINK OF ANY-THING BUT MOTOR-CYCLES, THOUGH HE'D DUMP ME IN A MINUTE IF HE COULD SLEEP WITH THEM, I BET.
I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET A LOT OUT OF LIFE.
IT'S GOOD TO PARTICI-PATE
YOU SURE ARE INVOLVED IN A LOT OF THINGS...
AW, C'MON...
HMPH! SEE IF I CARE... BUT YOU BETTER LET ME BORROW IT, OR I WON'T INTRODUCE YOU TO MY BEAUTY PARLOR, OR DANCE INSTRUCTOR, OR DIVING CLUB OR SILVER CRYSTAL TEAM, SO *THERE!*
HMM-- COR RUPTED BY MATERIAL ISM


SO BIOROIDS ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN GET EXTEN-SIONS, RIGHT?
ARUGESS, YOU IDIOT-- THERE GOES YOUR COVER!
CLONAL AGING?
CELLULAR BREAK DOWN?
THE TRAGEDY OF TESTTUBE REPRODUC-TION
THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW MANY LIFE EXTEN-SIONS YOU CAN GET. YOU'VE GOT TO ENJOY YOURSELF WHILE YOU CAN!

REALLY?
YOU CAN IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT, MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY, THE BODY'S RESISTANCE TO PATHOGENS-- THINGS LIKE THAT.
OF COURSE, LONGEVITY'S PARTLY A PRODUCT OF CULTURE!
THAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING BORN A BIOROID-- HAVING A BODY THAT CAN ACCEPT THAT KIND OF TREAT-MENT.


G-GAY... IS THIS A HYDROGEN ENGINE? WITH A HYPERRES-SURE TANK? A TURBO? REV IT UP FOR ME, WILL YA?
LOOKS LIKE YOU BIOROIDS STILL HAVE A FEW THINGS IN COMMON WITH HUMANS...

ZZZZTT
KYAAAA!
TIME FOR YOUR PAVLOVIAN TREAT-MENT, DARLING!

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